

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY AND OTHER TALES

Retold by
ROGER LANCELYN GREEN

The fairy-tales of "The Sleeping Beauty", "Puss in Boots" and "Cinderella" are, in one form or another, among the oldest stories in the world-and who has not found that the oldest favourites are usually the best and always the best loved? These three stories were first retold in the form most familiar to us by Charles Perrault in 1697; but the life of a fairy-tale—and one of its chief joys—depends on a constant retelling of it, each narrator adding his own details, each artist seeing the scenes and characters in a different way-yet always keeping the story itself unchanged.

Here are these three favourite fairy-tales in their latest dress, retold by Mr Roger Lancelyn Green, re-pictured by Miss Rene Cloke. You will find many new and unexpected details in the stories, many delightful and original touches in the illustrations, but, above all, you will find three of the best stories ever invented—stories so ancient that they can never grow old.

with dear love.

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THE SLEEPING BEAUTY





The Oldest of All the Fairies sang, to a tune of seven sharps.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

AND OTHER TALES

Retold by
ROGER LANCELYN GREEN

and illustrated by RENE CLOKE



EDMUND WARD

16 New Street, Leicester

CHARLES PERRAULT

Charles Perrault, the originator of the stories in this book, was born in Paris in 1628. His father was an advocate and Charles, the youngest of four sons, commenced his career in the legal profession. It is said, however, that at the Collège de Beauvais he quarrelled with his masters, and the rest of his education was left to chance. He took to his law studies fitfully but eventually qualified and took his licence at Orleans in 1651. In time, the routine of the legal world proved too much for him and he turned to matters of art and architecture. His literary abilities developed and he became, in turn, critic, poet and a member of the French Academy.

Perrault is best known for the fairy tales which, it is alleged, were repeated to him by his small son. These he published in *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé*, with the title on the frontispiece of "Contes de ma Mère L'Oye" ("Mother Goose's Tales"). In addition to the tales told in these pages, Perrault wrote "Little Red Riding Hood", "Bluebeard", "The Fairy", "Riquet of the Tuft" and "Tom Thumb".

Whether or not Perrault's son is claimed as the source of these tales, Perrault himself will remain immortal as the original teller and author of them.





The Sleeping Beauty

THERE was once, in the olden days, a noble King whose home was in a fine and beautiful Castle. There were many tall towers with twisty-winding staircases; there were long, narrow passages in all the walls, with little rooms for the archers and slender loopholes through which they could shoot their arrows if any foes should attack the Castle. There was a great banqueting hall a hundred feet wide, and there were more rooms than you could possibly count in a whole day. Some of these rooms were light and warm and pleasant; they had silken hangings on the walls and thick carpets on the floors; they had bright fires burning on the hearth and comfortable chairs and couches against the walls. But many of the rooms were small and dark and cold; these had damp stone walls and narrow windows half hidden with ivy. There were cobwebs in the corners and dust on the floors—and some of the rooms had not been visited for hundreds of years!

How happy the King should have been with so wonderful a Castle for his very own! He had more than three hundred servants and retainers, followers and men-at-arms, who lived in the Castle—besides his subjects who lived in all the towns and villages, the manors and the cottages, all around; and, best of all, there was the Queen, his beloved wife. What King could wish for more?

Ah, but the King and the Queen were not happy, not happy in the least: for they had no children. And of all things in the world they wished most to have a little Prince or a little Princess of their very own. But at long last a daughter was born to them, the loveliest baby Princess in the whole world.



What rejoicings there were throughout the land! How loudly the joy-bells rang in every tower and steeple when the news became known!

"Hip-hip-hurrah!" shouted the King, tossing his crown high into the air and dancing round his Royal Council Chamber when the Royal Head Nurse brought the little Princess to show him: "Now I am indeed the happiest King in the world!"

Then he rushed upstairs, three steps at a time (only stopping at the Office of the Lord High Chancellor to issue a Royal Proclamation and free beer to all the Bellringers in his Kingdom); and he kissed the Queen, and he kissed the Princess—and he kissed the Royal Head Nurse as well, and

she was so flustered that she dropped a curtsey and a golden bowl of hot water!

Very soon the bells began to ring, and the whole Castle shook with the noise.

"My dear!" shouted the King, "we must have a Royal Christening!"

"My dear!" bellowed the King, "we must have a Grand Banquet after the christening!"

"My dear!" yelled the King, "we must invite all the Royal Uncles and Aunts!"

"My dear!" howled the King, "we must invite all the Dukes and Earls and Marquises!"

"My dear!" shrieked the King, "we must invite all the neighbouring Princes and Princesses!"

"My dear!" screamed the Queen, "WE MUST INVITE ALL THE FAIRIES!"

Then the Royal Invitations were sent out-printed in Golden



Gothic upon Varnished Vellum—and particular care was taken that all the Fairies should be invited: all the Fairies, that is, who were at this time living in the Kingdom.

The great day arrived, and with it came seven of the loveliest fairies that were ever seen. They were all young, and each of them was remarkably pretty. The eldest had golden hair as bright as a cornfield; her dress was of pale green silk and her girdle was of gold and rubies, and she carried in her hands a golden casket of jewels.

The next had golden hair too, but it gleamed like the evening sunlight upon burnished copper; she was dressed all in white, and her gift was a lovely veil that the Princess should wear on her wedding day: it was an enchanted veil from the Island of Paphos, and the bride who wears it shall never have cause to be jealous. The third was the

youngest of the Fairies; her hair was brown like autumn leaves and her frock like the hare-bell flower; her gift was a posy of magic blossoms from the Garden of Hesperus, and whoso wore those flowers would never grow old. The fourth had brown hair also, but it was soft and light as the down on a baby thrush's wing, and her dress of palest grey with a

faint pink lining to the sleeves. She bore in her hands an alabaster jar of perfumed ointment, her gift to the little Princess; for if she did but dip her finger into the jar and pass it lightly over her face on each midsummer morning, there would never be a line nor a wrinkle in her skin, though she lived a thousand years. The fifth Fairy was robed in rich red, and





her jet-black hair fell to her shoulders; and she carried a sash of the loveliest Eastern silk—the magic girdle of beauty for the slimmest waist in the world. There came also a sixth Fairy with flaxen hair, holding in her hands a necklace of diamonds, and wearing a dress of the palest orange embroidered in silver. The stones of the necklace shone like the very stars, and whoso wore it her eyes should never grow dim. And leading the whole procession came a little Fairy in a pointed cap and a dress like the flower of the ragged-robin; she carried a big basket of the magic nuts that never grow fewer however many are eaten.

Now, when the christening was over, the King led the way into the Banqueting Hall of the Castle, where the most magnificent feast was set out. The great tables were spread with damask cloths as white as snow; the dishes were of gold and silver, of coloured glass and of beautiful painted china; and in every place was a gift for the guest and a little white card, with a posy of forget-me-nots painted in one corner, and the guest's name written across the middle of the card in curly **Black Letters** by the Royal Secretary in Chief, who had sat up for two whole nights to have all the cards written in time.

Everyone had some gift or another, but the seven Fairies had the rarest and most valuable gifts of all, for they had each a golden case fitted with white satin in which, set each in a special hollow, were a spoon, a knife and a fork also of solid gold and decorated with rubies and diamonds.

How pleased all the Fairies were with their presents; and so were all the other guests as well! Everyone was laughing and talking merrily, everyone was happy from the King to the scullion; and the little Princess lay in her golden cradle under the soft silk curtains edged with lace, and crowed and gurgled and waved her golden rattle with its curly coral handle and its little tinkling silver bells.

The sun was shining brightly outside, and the birds were singing their gayest songs, but all of a sudden a strange hush fell upon everything and the sky grew suddenly dark as if a dreadful thunderstorm were about to begin. The bright yellow sunbeams that slanted in through the tall windows turned a sickly green, and the Royal Cat, who sat beside the fire in the Royal Hearth, arched his back and curled up his lips and spat and swore.

A silence came upon all in the Banqueting Hall, and everyone remained suddenly still as if turned into stone—one with a glass of wine at his lips, another with a slice of roast peacock

halfway to her mouth on the prongs of her golden fork.

Then the door opened all by itself, and there entered the Oldest of All the Fairies, hobbling with the aid of a stick, bent double with age and bad temper, crooked with crossness and cramp. She was dressed all in black; her grey hair came straggling out from under her pointed hat, and she tapped with her stick as she walked, and muttered to herself all the time with about as much good temper as a jackal with the jaundice.

The King saw her, and he trembled until his crown very nearly fell into the soup; the Queen saw her, and



she muffled a scream in her Royal Damask Dinner Napkin; the seven lovely Fairies saw her, and they grew very grave. For these recognised the Oldest of All the Fairies the moment they saw her, and each of them feared the worst.

Now, the Oldest of All the Fairies had once been well known in that Kingdom, and had always been held in much dread on account of her bad temper. But for the last fifty years no one had ever seen her, and the tower in which she lived had stood dark and cold without ever a glimmer of light in its windows nor puff of smoke from its chimneys. And all the people had breathed a sigh of relief, and said one to the other: "Surely the Oldest of All the Fairies is dead at last!" And the King and the Queen had also believed that she was dead, and so they did not send her any invitation to the christening of the little Princess.

"Hoity-toity!" cackled the Oldest of All the Fairies, "here's a pretty party indeed! And never an invitation for me! Three hundred and four Royal Christenings have there been in this Castle, and never a one but I have come as the guest of honour."

"Ah, madam," said the unfortunate King, trying his hardest to sound pleased to see her, "I am indeed delighted at this unexpected honour. A false rumour deceived us into thinking that you were dead—how truly overwhelmed we are to discover our mistake, and to find you amongst us once more—and still in the . . . er . . . prime of youth!"

"Prime of fiddle-sticks!" snapped the Oldest of All the Fairies, opening and shutting her mouth like a rusty coal-scuttle. "You shall indeed be overwhelmed before I leave—but not with delight, I can assure you! Well, don't keep me standing about like this: Kings and Queens had better manners than this when I was an elf!"

The Queen jumped up and with her own hands set a place for the Oldest of All the Fairies; the King jumped up and ran to the Royal Sideboard, where he carved three beautiful slices from the breast of the roast peacock, and helped her to new potatoes and green peas out of the Royal Crown Derby vegetable dishes.

But alas, there was no gift of golden knife and fork and spoon set with jewels for the Oldest of All the Fairies—for seven sets and no more had been made by the Royal High Goldsmith and decorated by the Royal High Jeweller—and these sets had been given already to the seven beautiful Fairies!

How the Oldest of All the Fairies grumbled and groused, muttered and mouthed, cursed under her breath and ground the only two teeth that were left to her!

"Someone shall suffer for this!" she mumbled through a mouthful of roast peacock. "Canaries and cobras! I've never been so insulted in all my born days! Adders in aspic! I'll show them whether I'm dead or not! What tears shall flow for this day's work, ha-ha! Yes, by nightmares and neuritis, they shall be wringing their hands—and their handkerchiefs—for many a long year after this!"

So she fumed and fretted away to herself as she gobbled and guzzled, snatching the best of everything that was offered to her. But the Youngest Fairy of All, who was sitting next to her, heard every word; and being a wise and prudent little Fairy, she slipped away when the Banquet was ended, and hid behind a tapestry curtain that hung on the wall not far from the Royal Cradle.

At long last the great feast was finished, and all the guests began to gather round the Royal Cradle, where lay the little Princess. For now the most important part of the whole christening party was about to begin. Every guest indeed had already given some present or other to the Princess (except, of course, the Oldest of All



the Fairies), but now each of the Fairies was to give her a second and a more wonderful kind of gift—such gifts as only Fairies can give.

First came the Fairy with hair as golden as a field of corn; she stood beside the cradle, waved her wand, and made a rhyming spell:

Little Princess sleeping there,
None in all the world shall be
Half so lovely, half so fair,
Half so beautiful as thee!

And the Fairy with the sunlit-copper hair made also a spell as she gave her gift:

Little Princess sleeping there, Be all wisdom in your eyes; Man shall not find anywhere One so witty, one so wise.

Next came the Fairy with the pale brown hair like the wing-feathers of thrush or skylark, and she sang:

Little Princess sleeping there
With the sunlight in your face,
Like a glad bird in the air
You shall move with perfect grace.



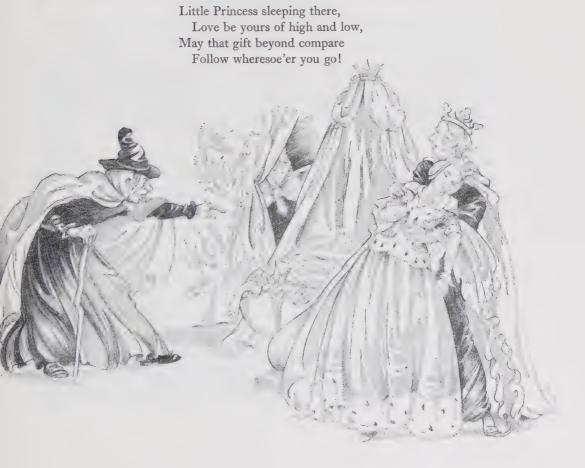
And after her it was the turn of the black-haired Fairy, who spoke in a quiet, far-away voice:

Little Princess sleeping there, Never, never come to thee Sorrow that is sore to bear; Still be yours tranquillity.

Then came the Fairy with the flaxen hair, who sang in a clear, high voice:

Little Princess sleeping there, Sing you sweet as any bird, Gladness banish every care, Songs of joy alone be heard.

And when she had finished singing, the little Fairy in the pointed cap stole up to the side of the Royal Cradle and whispered:



How happy the King and the Queen felt when all these wonderful gifts of beauty, wisdom and grace, of peace, harmony and affection, had been given to their little daughter by the kind Fairies! It seemed too good to be true—and it was!

For all of a sudden the Oldest Fairy came hobbling up to the Cradle side, cackling cruelly to herself, and rubbing her skinny hands together.

The Queen turned pale as death; the King gripped his golden sceptre so tightly that it bent in his hands. The whole Court held their breaths until you could have heard a diamond pin drop: and in that dreadful silence the Oldest of All the Fairies sang, to a tune of seven sharps:

Little Princess sleeping there, With a spindle, by and by, Shalt thou, ere thy twentieth year, Prick thy finger and so die!

The Queen screamed and fainted; the King dropped his sceptre on the marble floor; the ladies and the maids of honour fell a-weeping; the lords and the men-at-arms cursed the Oldest of All the Fairies under their breath. But she, laughing like a wheel-that-wants-greasing, struck the ground with her wand, and vanished away in a great cloud of evil-smelling smoke, leaving only on the white marble floor a horrid, slimy stain, that no one could wash away.

When she had gone, and when all the windows had been opened to let out the smell of the smoke, and when the Queen had been revived with rose-water and smelling-salts, everyone gathered round the Royal Cradle with tears running down their faces. What could be done? What was the use of all the wonderful fairy gifts if the Princess must die before she was grown up? Even the Fairies could not help, for by the Fairy Rule they could give one gift for the present, and one for the future and no more at the christening of a human child.

All were in despair—when suddenly from behind the curtains near the Royal Cradle peeped a lovely little face surrounded by hair as golden brown as the leaves of Autumn. It was the Youngest Fairy of All.

"Ah, King and Queen," she said, "do not give up all hope—for I have still a gift to give. Listen! Although my hair be like the brown dead leaves of Autumn, I am clad in fair fresh garments of the Spring, and the flowers that I carry do not die. I cannot undo all that the Oldest Fairy has done—for she is very ancient and I am very young. But what I can do that I will—and all shall end happily at last."

Then, stooping over the Royal Cradle she sang more sweetly than an angel:

Little Princess sleeping there,
This I give you: love divine;
Youth shall sleep a hundred year,
Wake and find that life is thine!

There was a long, long silence after this, even when the Youngest of the Fairies stooped and kissed the little Princess, and then floated away on the golden sunbeam of the evening, and was lost in the music and the beauty of the ending day.

Then everyone seemed to wake up almost as if they had been asleep and dreaming. But alas, the gift of the Oldest Fairy was no dream!

The King picked up his sceptre, ordered the Royal Trumpeter to blow a call on his golden trumpet, and, seating himself upon his throne, he issued a Proclamation.

"Be it known unto all men and all women in my Kingdom! On pain of death no one shall use or own or make any spinning wheel, distaff or spindle; and, moreover, every spindle, distaff and spinning wheel, either large or small, in all my Kingdom shall be brought to the courtyard of this, my Castle before tomorrow night. This is my command!"

The Trumpeter blew his trumpet once more, and the Royal Messengers set forth in all directions to read aloud the Royal Proclamation and declare the King's command on every village green and in every market square throughout all the land.



By dusk on the following day there was such a pile of wooden spinning wheels, with spindles and distaffs to match, heaped up in the courtyard, that it reached almost as high as the Castle wall itself. And when all was ready, the King took the flint and steel, and with his own hand he set alight to the pile, blowing the fire with the Royal Pair of Bellows out of the Queen's drawing room until the flames leaped up and roared into the sky. It was the biggest bonfire ever seen—and the hottest too! How the Castle escaped from being burned down, no one could ever tell! The paint blistered and peeled from the doors and windows; the lead melted and dripped from the roofs and gutters; and not a pane of glass was left unbroken in any of the two hundred and seven windows that looked into the courtyard. How the Royal Tilers and the Royal Glaziers, the Royal Joiners and the Royal Painters grumbled at so much extra work! Only the Royal Gardeners were pleased—for the great bonfire had burned up all the weeds between the cobbles in the courtyard: and everyone knows what a tiresome job weeding is,

most of all when it is a matter of weeding the back yard!

The years went by peacefully and happily—and never was there a spindle to be seen in all the Kingdom. The people grumbled a little at first, but very soon it seemed quite the usual thing to take the freshly shorn fleeces of the sheep into some neighbouring land to be spun, and to return only with the finished thread all ready for the loom: for weaving was not forbidden though spinning had become High Treason!

The little Princess grew up very happily in the Castle; she played with her toys in the Royal Nursery when she was still a little girl—and the Royal Head Nurse would sit back in the Royal Rocking-chair and say: "Oh, dearie, dearie me! Never in all my born days did I see such a child! Indeed and indeed, but I've never once known Her Royal High Babyship to cry with temper; and not once has she thrown the Royal Crown Derby Porridge Bowl on to the Royal Nursery floor!"

When the Princess grew a little older, the Royal Head Governess would purse up her lips and polish up her spectacles and remark: "Amazing! Quite amazing! Her Royal Schoolgirlship is indeed remarkable! She really revels in Arithmetic, she actually adores Algebra—and she always does twice as much Prep. as she is set! A model child indeed!"

The years went by, and now the Princess was a grown-up young lady of seventeen—so wise that the Royal Head Governess sent in her notice; so beautiful that even the Lord High Executioner fell in love with her; so kind that the very mice behind the wainscot were her friends.

"Ah, my dear," said the King, as he sat with the Queen drinking coffee one winter's morning by the fire in the Royal Parlour, "was there ever a couple so blessed in their child as you and I?"

"She's the sweetest, dearest, best Princess in the world," agreed the Queen, helping herself to honey with a golden spoon. "But alas and alack, I fear that we may lose her soon!"

"Lose her?" said the King, pausing with the Royal Breadknife halfway through the Royal Loaf of Bread. "Oh, you mean that some handsome young Prince will come along and marry her? Well, well—Princes will be Princes! But, my dear—whoever marries our daughter will be the next King here—and we can quite well insist that they set up house in the Castle: we could give them their own private apartments in the Keep, you know."

But the Queen suddenly put her head in her hands and began to cry: "I'm thinking of the Oldest of All the Fairies!" she sobbed.

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And the King grew very grave—for he had quite forgotten all about the christening curse of that wicked old wretch.

That very morning—it was the Royal Birthday, and so there were no lessons to be done—the Princess had decided to explore every room in the Castle. For although she had lived there all her life, it was so big that there were quite a number of parts where she had never been.

It was a gloomy, rainy day—not at all nice for walking in the Royal Rose Garden or riding in the Royal Paddock—and so she set out all by herself through the long dark passages and up and down the twisty spiral staircases, humming a little tune as she went, with never a care or a fear in the world.

First she went through the Armoury where all the armour, the helmets and the breast-plates, the swords and the daggers, the halberts and the battle-axes were kept. The Royal High Armourer in Chief bowed low to the Princess, and she waved her white hand to him, and went on her way.

Next she went along the narrow passage in the outer wall, past the little rooms with the tall loopholes where the archers and the cross-bow-men stood when the Castle was besieged. But now all the rooms were full of dust and cobwebs, for it was a hundred years since any foes had attacked the Castle—and the twenty-four Royal Housemaids nearly always forgot to spring-clean that part.

It grew quieter and quieter as the Princess went on, more and more lonely and deserted. One would almost have thought that she was exploring a ruined, empty Castle where nobody had lived for years and years; even the walls were grown with ivy and creeper, making the rooms and passages dark and gloomy and mysterious.

Presently the Princess came to the Great Tower at the very end of the Castle, and began to go up the dusty old spiral staircase. Up and up it wound, through dust and cobwebs and dead leaves; now she passed a great empty guard-room with a low arched roof of stone; and now a passage leading to a row of store-rooms or prison-cells. The Princess did not stop to explore these rooms, but went on

steadily up the tower, even when she came to the end of the spiral staircase and found herself mounting a steep, straight, narrow flight of stone steps built in the thickness of the wall, and even when the mice ran squeaking from her footfalls and the bats flapped and fluttered about her head.

At last she came to the very top, and there in front of her was an old wooden door fastened together with big iron strips and heavy iron nails. There was a large ring handle on the door, and the Princess took hold of it with both hands and turned and pulled it, until the door opened slowly towards her, creaking and shrieking on its hinges.

The Princess found herself looking into the strangest and most unexpected room! It was quite small, but not in the least bit dark or dusty; a cheerful fire burned on the hearth; there was a carpet on the floor, there were little diamond-shaped panes of glass in the tall, narrow windows, and the walls were panelled with brown oak. But it was not any of these things which most surprised the Princess—far from it indeed, for in front of the fire was the least-expected thing of all: a little old woman with white hair and a wimple sitting on a stool and working merrily away at a spinning-wheel.

"Click-clack, clickerty-clack!" went the spinning-wheel as the little old woman worked; gaily she spun the spindle between her hands, drawing the great white mist of fluffy sheep's wool into a firm, strong thread. And as she worked she sang in a little high voice:

With the whirr of the wheel and the spindle,
The treadle's brave clickerty-clacks,
The wool on my distaff shall dwindle,
While combing and carding the flax.
Oh, bright as the flames that enkindle,
Oh, soft as the silkiest down,
Shall the thread that is drawn from my spindle
Be worn by the Queen in her gown!

When the little old woman had finished her song, she turned to the Princess. "My pretty child," she said, smiling kindly, "you are the first visitor I have had these twenty years and more. My dear, you are truly welcome!"

The Princess came into the room and stood beside the spinning-wheel. "Old woman, old woman," said she, "what are you doing with that funny wooden wheel? And oh, what a fascinating noise it makes!"

"Dearie me!" exclaimed the little old woman, who had never heard of the Royal Proclamation, and had no idea that this was the Princess. "Dearie, dearie me! How ignorant young ladies are these days, to be sure! Who are you, so lovely and so badly brought up that you do not know that I am spinning?"

"I? Oh, I'm the Princess," was the answer, "but do, please, let me see if I can spin too—it looks such fun, and not really very difficult."

The little old woman curtseyed low to the Princess, and put a comfortable cushion for her on the little wooden stool.

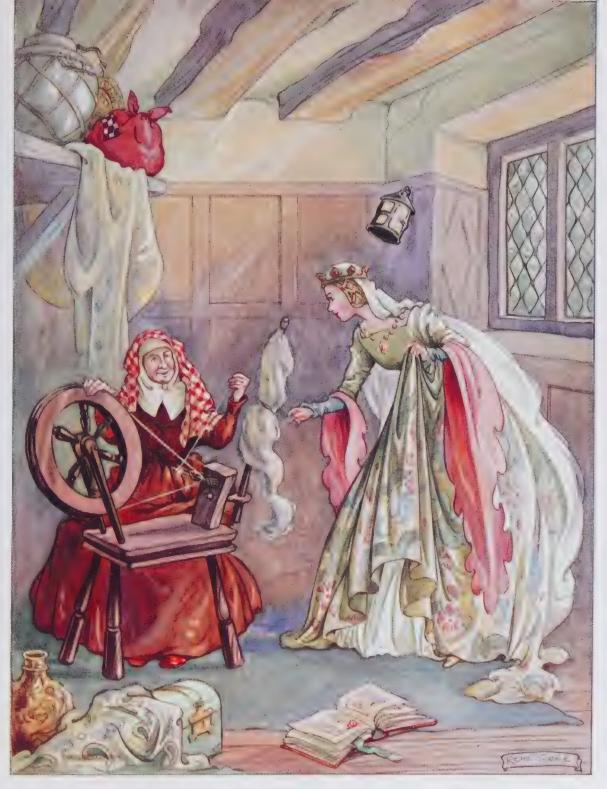
"Sit here, Your Royal Highness," she said. "Put your foot on the treadle, so! Take the spindle in your hand, and we will begin your first spinning lesson!"

The Princess did as she was told; but she was so eager to begin that she dropped the spindle; and as she caught hold of it to prevent it from falling to the floor, the sharp end pricked her finger. And hardly had she felt the smart, before all the room began to swim round her, to grow dark and fade away; a distant music seemed to lull her into sleep, and she slipped from the stool on to the floor, with her eyes closed.

"Wake up, my dear!" cried the little old woman. But it was no good. She shook the Princess by the shoulder, but all in vain. She dashed cold water into the Princess's face—but still she did not wake.

Then the little old woman became really frightened, and she ran into a little turret at the corner of her room and began to pull a dusty old rope which came down through a hole in the ceiling. And presently the great alarm bell, which was fixed in its own little belfry above the great tower, began to peel forth the tune that had not been heard for a hundred years:

Ding, dong, bell; All is not well! Ring the alarm! Citizens, arm! Ding, dong, bell.



"Old woman, old woman," said the Princess, "what are you doing with that funny wooden wheel?"





All the people in the Castle, as soon as they heard the bell, started running towards the great tower to see who was ringing the alarm. And by and by they came stumbling up the narrow steps and into the room where the Princess lay.

First there came the page-boys and the sewing-maids, for they could run fastest up the stairs. Then the ladies-in-waiting and also the men-at-arms; the

lords and the courtiers as well, the cooks and the scullions. And they all tried to revive the Princess. They tried cold water and loud noises;

they tried smelling-salts and they tried shaking; they tried sal volatile and common sense; they tried fresh air and burned feathers; they took their time and her temperature; they felt her pulse and they felt non-plussed; but none of them was able to wake the Princess, and even the Royal Doctor could not find out what was the matter with her.

But at last the King himself came puffing up the stairs, and everyone drew back as he bent over the Princess, while the little old woman knelt with tears in her eyes and told him what had happened.



"Alas, and ah me!" cried the King, "the Christening Curse of the Oldest of All the Fairies has fallen upon my beloved daughter—and now she will sleep for a hundred years. Old woman, it was the prick of your spindle that sent the Princess into this charmed sleep—but I pardon you freely, for you did not know what you were doing."

Now there lived in the Castle a little dwarf who was the faithful servant of the Youngest Fairy; he had come with the rest to see why the alarm bell had been rung, and as soon as he heard the King's words, he slipped out of the room and set forth towards the Kingdom of Matakin, twelve thousand leagues away, where the Youngest Fairy was then staying. The dwarf was a fast walker, and as he was also wearing Seven League Boots, which carried him twenty-one miles at every step, he reached Matakin in a little over half an hour and five minutes, and told his tale to the Youngest Fairy, who instantly sprang into her chariot drawn by dragons and shook the reins.

But meanwhile the King had given orders that the Princess should be carried down from the tower and laid upon the bed in the best bedroom of the Castle. And first the bed was made up with silken sheets, and hung with embroidered curtains; then the Princess was laid upon it, clad in her loveliest robes. The King, the Queen and the





courtiers, when all this was done, went down to the great hall of the Castle to wait for the Youngest Fairy; but Mopsey, the Princess's little dog, stole quietly up to the Royal Best Bedroom, jumped on to the bed beside the Princess, and curled up there to wait until his mistress should wake up.

One hour after the dwarf had given her the news, the Youngest Fairy arrived in her chariot at the Castle gates, and the King came out to greet her, and led her straightway to where the Princess was sleeping.

"It has all happened as I promised," said the Youngest Fairy, "and now, as I have been able to prevent the wicked wish of the Oldest of All the Fairies, your daughter shall not die, but must sleep for a hundred years. At the end of that time a Prince shall come and waken her. But now, go back all of you to your duties of every day

—and go you, Sir King, to your Council Chamber and confer with your wise men of what is to be done to safeguard the Princess while she is asleep."

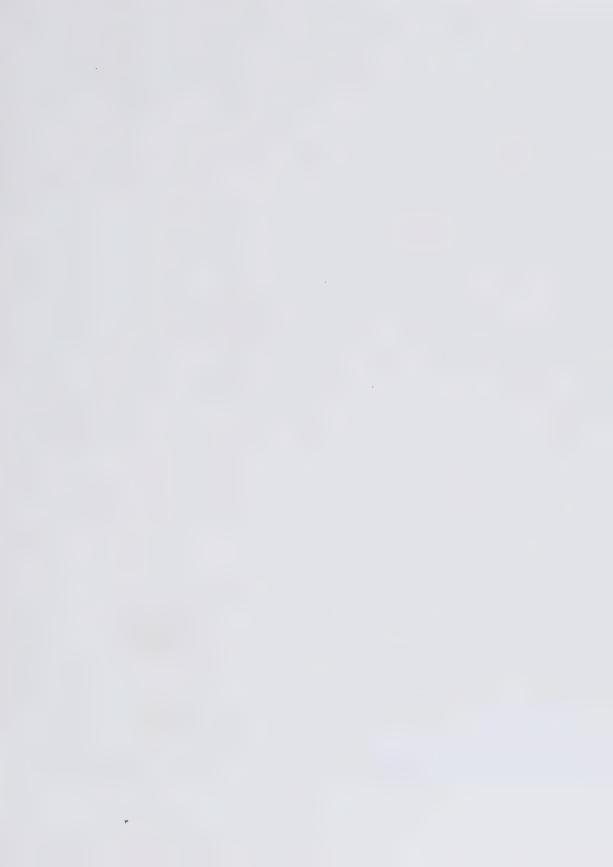
The Youngest Fairy said this, but she knew well enough what was to be done next—only she wished to be alone in the room where the Princess lay sleeping. When all had gone back to their several occupations, the Youngest Fairy made a Great Magic there in the quiet room where the sun slanted in, making pale pools and shadows on the floor; where the leaves of the creeper tapped and rustled against the window panes, still shining with the raindrops of the morning. For a little while the Fairy stood in the quiet room, her wand held above the Princess—and the Princess smiled in her sleep, and a little sigh came from her parted lips as if she had entered into some sleepy kingdom of rest and quiet dreams.

The Fairy bent next and touched little Mopsey with her wand; and the same repose fell upon the dog, so that he curled up yet more comfortably beside his mistress, nestling his cool black nose under her open hand.

Then the Youngest of the Fairies went through the Castle more swiftly than a sunbeam and as silently as thought; and it seemed as if some spirit of sleep and a great peace passed with her through every room and passage, across every courtyard and garden, into every byre and stable, and out into the pleasant woodlands and parklands that surrounded it.

For when the Youngest of the Fairies came out of the Castle gates, she left behind her the charm of Sleep upon every living creature in the whole place—and upon everything that was not living also.

The King sat in his Council Chamber sleeping peacefully beneath his crown, and the Queen slept over the tea-table in the Royal Parlour, the honey half-spread upon the Royal Slice of Bread. The page-boys and the ladies-in-waiting slept in the ante-rooms—one with her fan half opened, another in the midst of a game of cards, a third with her fingers still upon the keys of the spinet, a fourth with a lump of sugar held out to the canary which slept now in its golden





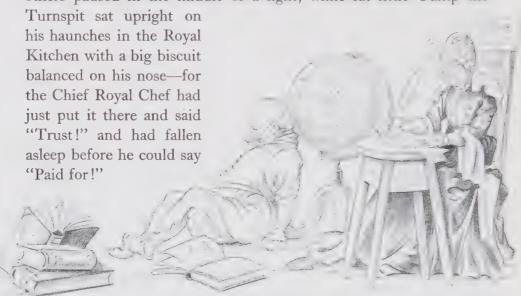
"Ah, sir stranger," said the landlord, "there is nothing in the Wood but an old and desolate ruin."

cage, a fifth with the poker ready pushed between the bars of the grate in which the fire was sleeping also—neither burning any more of the logs nor melting the end of the golden poker—and so with the other ladies. In another room slept the courtiers, some of them Dukes and Earls, Barons and Baronets; four of them sat round a card-table playing the Royal and Ancient game of Ombre, and one of them was about to cheat with a trump card, though he had one of the suit still in his hand; another slept with the lighted taper held to the bowl of his long clay pipe—but the flame was asleep, and the taper did not burn down to his fingers; some slept in the middle of arguing, and some making bets on the horses in a great horse-race being run that day at the other end of the Kingdom.

In the Royal Pantries slept the butlers and the parlour maids; one was cleaning the Royal Spoons; another was running water into the Royal Flower Vase—but the water slept on its way out of the tap, and did not overflow the vase; a third was making butter-pats with a dripping pair of golden "Dutch Hands", and slept with the butter half rolled-yet the butter did not go bad during all the years, nor did it stick to the "Dutch Hands", for the water remained damp on them while the magic sleep lasted. Down in the kitchens the cooks slept as they leaned over the range and paused in stirring the pots which never boiled over; one was mincing a joint of lamb, but the joint remained fresh and the little corkscrew twists of meat that came gyring and gimbling out of the mincer did not even become dry and stale; another was making a pancake, which remained unburnt at the bottom of the pan; and others were peeling potatoes and slept with the skins hanging from their fingers. In one room the Castle Cat was



crouched ready to spring upon a little brown mouse that sat up and looked saucily at her: but now both were asleep within two feet of each other. The dogs were also asleep; some with bones half-eaten, others paused in the middle of a fight, while fat little Tump the



Up in the Royal Nursery the old Royal Head Nurse slept in her chair; she was knitting a shawl, and had just stopped to count the stitches: "ninety-seven, ninety-eight, ninety-nine" she said—and then she fell asleep. In the Royal Schoolroom the Head Governess was correcting the Princess's Latin exercise: she had just dipped the pen into the red ink to write "Ten out of ten" at the end of it—but now she was asleep, and the ink did not dry up in the inkpot; and the Royal Tutor, who was a fat little man, slept on the floor with his head against the globe—but, for the first time in his whole life, he was not snoring!

At the Castle gates the sentries slept on duty—and yet none of them was court-martialled. In the Royal Garden the Royal Gardeners were asleep too—one just about to fall off the top of a ladder as he reached to pick late pears; another leaning over the spade with which he was trenching celery; and a third in the middle of watering the Michaelmas Daisies with a watering-can from which the water did not run any more, for it was asleep also. The garden-boy was stealing grapes through a hole in the glass roof of the Royal Vinery—but he fell asleep holding a bunch of grapes that never withered nor grew over-ripe. The horses slept in the stables, and the grooms were asleep too—one with a bundle of hay on the end of a pitch-fork; another mixing a bran-mash, which remained moist and did not grow rancid in its sleep; a third was rubbing down the King's racehorse, and fell asleep hanging on to its tail; and another had the broomhandle raised above his head to hit at a large rat which had just run out of a hole in the bottom of a sack of corn; but now the rat was asleep also. The birds were asleep in the trees; the flowers slept best of all, for they were all in their own beds! The very smoke fell asleep as it went up the Castle chimneys, so that it never appeared at the top.

The Youngest Fairy saw all this as she came through the Castle and out beyond the woodlands and the parklands, and she smiled to see how well her magic worked. The dwarf was waiting at the head of her dragons, to make sure that they did not run away, and he helped her into the chariot, and got up behind on the "step".

But as they drove away, the Fairy waved her wand once more towards the Castle, and at once there began to grow up a great dense wood all round about the Castle. Thorn trees and brambles sprang up to such a height that in a quarter of an hour scarcely even the tops of the highest towers could be seen; and the wood was so dense and the thorns and briars so strong and sharp that neither man nor beast could possibly pass through it or come near the Castle.

At first there came robbers and adventurers who tried to break a way through the wood to ransack the Castle; but some the thorns caught and held until they died, and their bones hung there whitening to frighten away other thieves; and many more soon gave up all thought of passing the Magic Wood. But as the years went by, fewer and fewer people tried the Quest of the Sleeping Castle, and indeed almost everyone forgot before very long what exactly it was that lay hidden there behind the clutching briars and brambles.



But when a hundred years had passed, there came a Prince out of the far-distant Kingdom of Matakin—sent, no doubt, by the Youngest of the Fairies, who was his Godmother also. He was the handsomest Prince in all the world at that time, and the bravest too, and now he was in quest of adventures, seeking through the wide world, as a Prince should, to find the Princess whose face he had seen in a dream and who, so the dream seemed to tell him, was waiting somewhere for him alone to find where she slept until his coming.

He came to the edge of the Great Wood, and he saw the tops of the towers glow red with the setting sun above the blackthorns and the green creepers and brambles. And presently, as he stood there, the landlord from the nearby inn came out and spoke to him; and one or two of the villagers, who were passing on their way to the inn, stopped also to see what the handsome young traveller was enquiring about.

"Ah, sir stranger," said the landlord, "there is nothing in the Wood but an old and desolate ruin—haunted with ghosts and goblins that shriek on winter nights."

"Not so, not so! It is worse than that!" cried the village priest, who had overheard the landlord's words; "that Castle is an abode of evil: there all the sorcerers and witches, all the were-wolves and kindred spirits meet to hold their Hellish rites and Sabbaths of Witchcraft!"

"I know not of Witches and Warlocks," interrupted the school-master, "but this I do know: an Ogre lives in that Castle, and by night he comes out and carries away little children, whom he can cook and eat at his leisure—for none but he can pass through that Wood."

But a very old man, who was passing at that moment, drew the Prince aside, and said to him in a low voice:

"Royal Sir, do not believe these idle stories. Fifty years and more ago my father told me the tale of that Castle, as his father had told it to him. It is a place of good and not of evil. Therein sleeps a Princess, the loveliest in all the world, and she must sleep for an hundred years, by the will of the Fairies. But at the last there shall come that one Prince for whom she is destined—and he shall wake her from the magic sleep."

When the Prince heard these words he rejoiced exceedingly; but for that night he turned back and went to the village inn with his new acquaintances. But early next morning he girded on his sword,



swung his cloak over his shoulder, and set out upon the Quest of the Sleeping Castle. Many of the villagers followed him at a little distance, and they saw him come to the edge of the dark Wood, and disappear into the midst of the thorns and briars. But when they came to the place where he had entered, the briars and the thorns grew still so thickly that not one of them could pass—and there was no sign of where the Prince had gone into the Wood.

But he had gone in, nevertheless: for when he came to that terrible wall of sharp, cruel thorns, among which still rotted the bleached bones of those who had striven to pass it in days gone by—then the branches and the brambles drew back to either side, leaving a narrow, gloomy path—a tunnel that twisted and wound away into the centre of the Wood. Sword in hand, the Prince followed the path, his heart high with hope, and all unafraid, though the Wood closed in behind him as he went along. The trees stretched great claws like evil hands to catch at him; the roots curved and twisted in front of him like snares—but not so much as a bramble touched him; there was not so much as a thread pulled from his cloak by the cruel, grasping thorns.

About the middle of the day the Prince came suddenly to the main gate of the Castle. It was all grown about with creeper and brambles and convolvulus from the Magic Wood-but the door stood open and within was a silence more deep than death itself. Leaning against the wall near the gate, the Prince found a sentry, the bind-weed climbing up his legs and over his face. In the great courtyard the bodies of men and beasts lay or leaned about in the strangest attitudes, and the Prince passed through them like the last man in the world where all were dead but he. Next he came to the great hall of the Castle, and stood there listening to the greatest and most terrible silence that ever he had known. About the hall lay many more guards and men-at-arms, some it seemed struck down in the midst of eating, others in the midst of talking; some had been pulling on their boots and lay with one on and one off; others had been polishing their armour, and now it lay beside them half shining and half dull, just as far as they had cleaned it.



The Prince stood there a little while, and at first he felt almost afraid—for everything seemed to be dead. But presently he dared to look closer: stooping down, he touched a loaf of bread that lay beneath one man's hand—and found that it was as soft and fresh as on the day when it was made. Another held a mug of ale, and the foam still creamed over the top of it. Then the Prince saw that they were all asleep—men and dogs, the very loaves of bread and tankards of ale—



sleeping silently with never a snore, and breathing so gently that not even a whisper disturbed the stillness of that Castle of Sleep.

All fear left him now, and he put the sword back into its scabbard, and went forward, deeper into the Castle, his heart beating with excitement. On and on went the Prince, his steps echoing loud and hollow through the silence. He came to the guard-room where a troop of guards stood leaning on their pikes—fallen asleep in the very middle of their drill. He came to the Royal Council Chamber where the King slept in his chair of state, the crown tilted a little over one eye; where the Councillors and the Statesmen, the Philosophers and the Professors, slept round the table, some with their faces in their books, some drooping over the arms of the chairs, and one with his nose right in the inkpot. Last of all the Prince came to the Great Ante-room, where the ladies-in-waiting slept in groups all about the floor. Before they fell asleep they had been talking excitedly in whispers about the strange swoon into which the Princess had fallen, and the magic sleep overtook them in the midst of a sentence, with their heads close together.



The Prince drew near to the bed, paused, and caught his breath in wonder.





Across the room walked the Prince, in and out of the golden bars of sunlight, his cloak swishing against the chairs, and his footfalls echoing in the silence. At the end of the ante-room he came to a door with white panels and a china handle painted with forget-me-nots and pink rosebuds; and here the Prince paused for a little while, almost afraid to go on. But at last he put out his hand, trembling just a little, and turned the handle. The door opened with never a squeak of a hinge (although they had not been oiled for over a hundred years); and as he came through, the door swung shut behind him, the little click of the latch sounding as loud as a pistol-shot in the quietness. But still the great silence reigned over all the Castle, and never a living creature so much as stirred in its sleep.

The Prince found himself in a great, quiet room; the curtains of pale silk and honey-coloured lace were drawn back from the tall latticed windows, and the afternoon sun shone through them and seemed to glow throughout the room with a warm and gentle laziness. The walls were panelled in blue silk, parted by white wood decorated in gold, and on the floor lay a blue carpet like a summer sky, with fleecy white rugs of bear-skin scattered upon it in place of clouds. There stood a great bed in the room, its silk hangings drawn back, and by it a big bowl of roses all in bud and filling the room with a sweet scent.

The Prince drew near to the bed, and paused, and caught his breath in wonder. For upon it lay sleeping the loveliest Princess in all the world—the Princess whom he had seen in his dreams in the far-away Kingdom of Matakin. She was dressed in the most beautiful robes, embroidered and clasped with gold; the hair lay all about her face like a pool of autumn sunlight; the long lashes lay on her white face like delicate sunbeams, and her lips were parted as if she were about to whisper a name.

For a long, long time the Prince stood by the bedside and gazed down upon the sleeping Princess, and the love grew in his heart like a strain of heavenly music. At last he bent reverently down towards her, and kissed her gently on the lips. And the Princess stirred in her sleep, her white arms stole gently round his neck, her eyes opened and looked up into his:

"My darling," she murmured. "Oh, my Prince, is it you at last? How long you have been in coming to me!"

She nestled close to him, and he gathered her into his arms and said:

"My beloved Princess, ever since the Fairy showed you to me in a dream, I have been seeking through all the world to find you. Now you are found, and with you all happiness and all peace, and all awakening."

They kissed each other again, and as they did so, all the rosebuds in the great bowl beside the bed opened into flower, and the air seemed suddenly to be full of a great, distant music and the voice of the Youngest of the Fairies singing:

Little Princess waking here,
This I give you: love divine.
Youth has slept an hundred year;
Wake, and find that life is thine!

The words died away, but the music did not—for now it faded into the song which the birds, who had been silent for a hundred years, were singing in every tree and bush of the Castle garden—singing gently at first until they were well awake, but soon growing louder, shriller, gladder and more triumphant.

The Prince had meanwhile handed the Princess from off the bed, and led her over to the oriel window that looked out upon the Palace Rose Garden; he drew back the curtains, and they sat together, hand in hand, in the sunlight, Mopsey the little dog frisking gaily about on the floor beside them.

What did the Prince and the Princess talk about as they sat on the window seat and looked out over the flowers and bright green trees? Those who do not know can never invent it—and those who know can never remember the words.

It was the Princess who talked most—for indeed during the hundred years of her sleep the kind Fairy had given her sweet and wonderful dreams that had told her many things which she did not know, and taught her many words that she had not used before. The Prince said very little at first, but by degrees he found words too, and was able to tell his Princess how much he loved her, and all about his quest to find her.

The afternoon went by very quickly, whether they were speaking, or whether they sat in silence. And down below in the garden the shadows grew long, the birds went home to their nests, and the sunflowers began to fold their petals up for the night.

Then there was a tap on the door, and there was a lady-in-waiting, curtseying low to the Prince and Princess, and saying: "Your Royal Highnesses, the King and Queen await you!"

For now all the Castle was awake again! At the very moment when the Prince first kissed the sleeping Princess, the charm had been broken which had rested for a hundred years on everything in the Castle.

The ladies-in-waiting woke up in the next room and went on gossiping; the sentries woke at the Castle gates and straightened themselves to attention. The Queen finished spreading the honey on her Royal Slice of Bread; one lady went on playing the tune on the



spinet which the Charm of Sleep had interrupted: another poked the fire which was blazing up merrily again. The Baron who was cheating at cards picked up his Trump again, and apologised, and played the last card of the suit; the Earl finished lighting his pipe before the taper went out; the Duke and the Marquis went on laying bets on the horse-race—quite unaware that all the horses had died nearly a century before! The butlers and parlourmaids went on cleaning the spoons and filling the vases, and rolling the butter-pats; the cooks went on stirring the stew, and mincing the meat, and peeling the potatoes. The Royal Chef said "Paid for!" to Tump the Turnspit, who snapped at the biscuit which had sat upon his nose for a hundred years—and missed it! The Castle Cat pounced at the saucy little mouse—but it dodged down the mouse-hole just in time. The Royal Head Nurse said "One hundred!" and began a new row of knitting. The Royal Gardener fell off the top of his ladder with an over-ripe



pear in each hand; and the garden-boy picked the bunch of stolen grapes—and cut his wrist on the edge of the hole which he had made in the glass roof of the Royal Vinery. The horses and the grooms woke up too, as did the birds and the flowers, and the rats and the mice. The smoke came out of chimney pots, and the water came out of the taps. The great dark Wood, with its thorns and brambles, briars and creepers, withered all away in a few moments—and everything went on as if nothing had happened.

Only the King knew that a hundred years had passed—and even he did not know all that had happened until the Youngest of the Fairies arrived in her tiny chariot and told him the whole story.

Then the King and the Queen rejoiced together, and gave orders for the greatest feast to be prepared that had ever been held in the Castle. The King issued a Royal Proclamation to all his people—and more free beer to the bellringers—and he sent a lady-in-waiting to bring the Prince and the Princess.

When they came before him, he kissed and blessed them both, and sent them off to the Royal Chapel, with the Royal Chaplain and a few bridesmaids, to get married before the Banquet. The Fairy was present at the Wedding too, and she gave more gifts to the Prince and Princess to make them the happiest couple in the whole world; and she promised that they should live to a ripe old age, and finally die at the same moment, with their children and their grandchildren about them.

When the ceremony was over, the Princess got dressed for the Banquet and the Ball, in all her fairy Christening gifts. She wore the white and gold robe of beauty and the jewels of contentment; the posy of youth and the perfume of unending Spring; the wedding-veil of truth and the necklace of unweeping eyes. Never was there such a Banquet and never such a Ball. True, the tunes which the musicians played were none of them new; and the dresses of the Lords and Ladies were all a hundred years behind the fashion—but no one cared one jot—the Prince and the Princess least of all! For they were so happy, this Prince and Princess, both then and all the rest of their lives, that no trouble or care seemed ever able to come near them, even in after years when they became King and Queen of that Kingdom, the best loved that had ever reigned there.

But never in all its history was there such a night of happiness and rejoicing in the old Castle as that of the Wedding of the Prince and the Princess. The Ball went on until the birds were singing again in the trees of the Royal Gardens; until the morning sun came streaming in through the open windows; until the Royal Butlers and the Royal Parlour-maids were already laying luncheon in the great Royal Dining Room. Indeed, nobody went to bed at all that night, for, as you may well believe, no one in all the Castle was in the slightest need of sleep!

Puss in Boots Once upon a time a poor

Miller died, and he left all his possessions to his three sons. And indeed they did not need any lawyer to divide their father's estate amongst them—for he left only his Mill, his Ass and his Cat! The eldest son got the Mill, the second got the Donkey, and the third son had to be contented with the Cat.

"Alas!" he cried, "how unfortunate I am! For my two brothers may live comfortably enough if they set up in business together—but what am I to do? I can eat my Cat, and make his skin into winter

gloves; but after that I must die of cold and hunger!"

"Purr-ow!" said the Cat, who was listening carefully to his master's words, "Purr-ow-ow! Good Master, do not be so sad! You and I will set up house together, and I'll bet my tail and whiskers we make our fortunes long before your brothers! All I want is a good strong bag with strings to it. That, and—oh, my dear, kind Master—get me a pair of boots! Courage, good Master: give me but my boots, and you shall soon see whether or not I am worth my daily milk!"





The young man stroked the Cat, who purred and rubbed against his legs: "Ah, Puss, my only friend," he said, "all that I have shall be yours." For he knew that it was a cunning Cat, and had often seen him catch in the cleverest ways the rats and mice who lived in the Mill. Sometimes Puss used to hang himself up by the heels and pretend to be dead—until the rats came out to dance round the corpse of their enemy! At other times he would bury himself in the flour, with only his nose sticking out, and pounce on a thieving mouse or two—who, indeed, were often too scared even to run away when they saw the strange white monster that Puss became

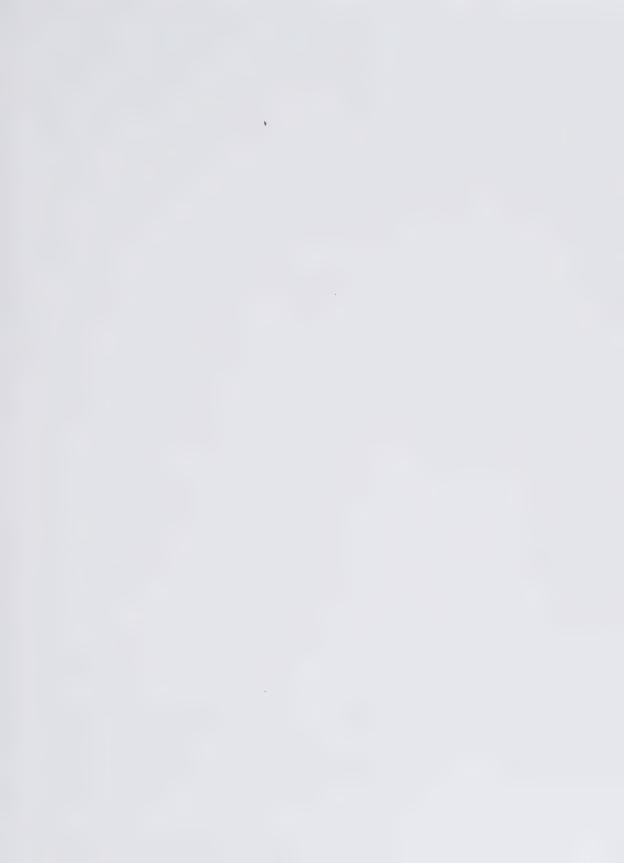
when he had lain a little while in this odd hiding-place.

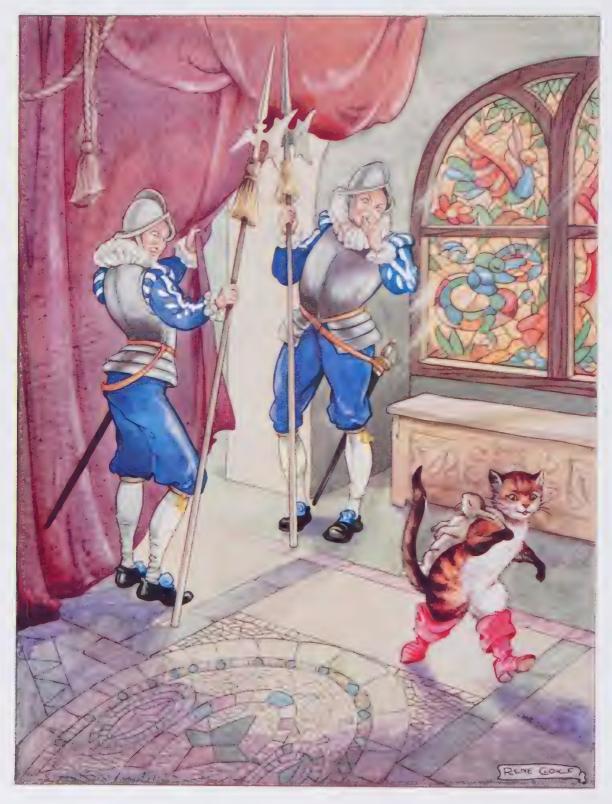
So the young man took his best and only cloak, and sat up late one night sewing it into a bag. The next morning he gave it to Puss, together with his one and only pair of boots. Puss purred with delight as he drew on the boots, and he went strutting round on his hind legs, clicking his heels together, as proud as a Prince! Then he slung the bag over his shoulder, and set out at top speed for the nearest rabbit-warren. Here he laid the bag on the ground quite near to a rabbit hole; and he put a paw-full of bran and some fresh lettuce leaves just inside it. Then he stretched himself out nearby, with his head all twisted to one side, and pretended that he had fallen off a tree and broken his neck.

Presently there came a young and foolish rabbit, lopping along with never a thought in its head for the deceitfulness of Cats. By and by

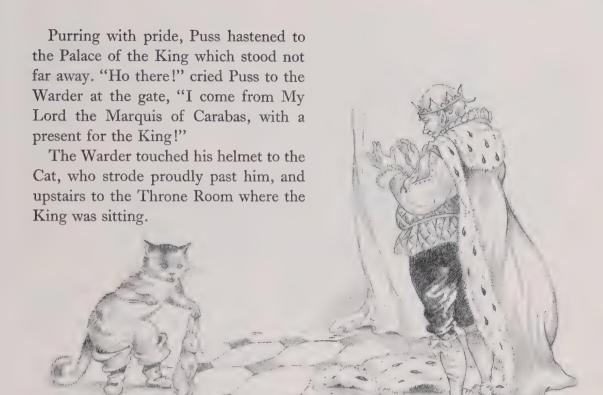
it smelt the bran and, seeing nothing anywhere near but what seemed to be the body of a dead cat lying on the ground, popped its head into the bag and began to feed. In an instant Puss pulled the strings that were threaded round the mouth of the bag—and the rabbit was caught.







Puss strode proudly past the Warders.



"Your Majesty," said Puss bowing low, "here I have a fine young rabbit, which my noble master the Marquis of Carabas has commanded me to present to you."

The King sprang to his feet with delight and took the rabbit from Puss with his own hands. "Tell My Lord the Marquis of Carabas", he said, "that I thank him most heartily for his kind gift. Roast rabbit shall be the dish of honour at the Royal Dinner-table tonight!" And he gave the Cat a golden guinea.

Another day Puss came to the Palace with a fine brace of partridges; and yet again with a pheasant, and once with a couple of woodcock. And always he said that the game was a gift from his master the Marquis of Carabas! And never did he go away without some coin or other from the grateful King.

But one day, a couple of months later, he went to the Miller's youngest son—who knew nothing of what was going on—and said to him, "Master, only do what I tell you today, and your fortune is indeed made! Go down to the river and bathe there—and don't show the least surprise at whatever happens!"



The young man did as he was told; and Puss, after he had taken away his clothes and put them on to a scarecrow in the middle of a nearby field, went and hid in the hedge beside the main road.

Now, the evening before, when he had been to the Palace with a fine fat leveret for the King, Puss had discovered that His Majesty and the Princess (his only child) would set out for a drive in the Royal Coach at noon the following day. So he waited behind the hedge until he saw the King and the Princess come driving along the road—and then he began to shout at the top of his voice:

"Help! help! My Lord the Marquis of Carabas is drowning!"

"What is wrong?" asked the King, putting his head out of the window to see why the coach had stopped.

"Oh, your Majesty! Your Majesty," mewed Puss, "send help, I pray you—for My Lord the Marquis of Carabas is drowning!"

When the King saw that it was the Cat in boots who had so often brought him the presents of game, he commanded his guards and



footmen to run at once where the Cat should lead, and rescue the Marquis of Carabas without delay.

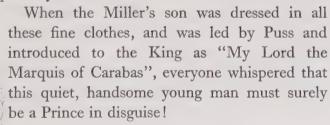
In a moment they pulled the young man out of the river.

But Puss had other plans. Back he came dashing to the Royal Coach, mewing with indignation.

"Oh, Your Majesty! Such a thing has happened! While My Lord the Marquis of Carabas was bathing in the river, wicked thieves have come and stolen away all his clothes!"

"Disgraceful!" cried the King; and he ordered a page-boy to run at full speed to the Palace (which was not above half-a-mile away) and bring the best suit of clothes from the Royal Wardrobe.

Off went the page, and he ran so fast that in a few minutes he returned carrying a soft doublet of satin, hose of spun silk, a cloak all embroidered with gold, and every other garment that the most elegant of Marquises could possibly need.



The King, indeed, was so pleased that he invited him there and then to ride in the Royal Coach. Now indeed the Miller's youngest son was the Marquis of Carabas—for there he was, out driving with the King, and sitting next to a lovelier Princess than he had ever dreamed there might be anywhere in the whole world! And the Princess smiled at him, and blushed when he smiled back at her—for she had begun already to fall in love with this handsome young Marquis, who was so much more simple and honest than the great lords of the Court with their compliments and their clever talk. And presently she gave him her hand to hold; and who then so happy in all the land as My Lord the Marquis of Carabas!

But meanwhile Puss had many other things to attend to, for he had made his plans, and everything was turning out just as he hoped. As soon as he saw his master safely seated beside the Princess in the Royal Coach, he set out at top speed along the road ahead of it. And early in the afternoon he came to a meadow where the farmer and his sons were mowing the hay and raking it up into haycocks.

"Ho, there!" cried Puss, the Master Cat, leaning on a bar of the gate, and showing his white teeth in a fierce grin. "You, my good people who are mowing the hay, listen to me! The King will be passing this way, and he is sure to stop and ask you to whom this beautiful meadow belongs. And if you do not tell him that it belongs to My Lord the Marquis of Carabas, you shall all be chopped as small as mincemeat!"

"Spare us, good Master Cat!" cried the farmer, falling on his knees and clasping his hands, "and we will indeed tell the King what you command us!"

"Do so," ordered Puss, waving his tail, and looking as fierce as a tiger, "or before nightfall you will each be cut into at least a thousand pieces!"

On he went down the road, purring proudly to himself.

Very soon the Royal Coach came to the meadow, and the King stopped it, and looked out of the window.



"What a fine field of hay this is!" he exclaimed; and he asked the farmer, who came forward bowing humbly with hat in hand, who was the owner of the meadow.

"It belongs to My Lord the Marquis of Carabas!" said the farmer, and all his sons joined in: "Yes, to My Lord the Marquis of Carabas" —for they were all terribly afraid of what the Cat had threatened.

"Let me congratulate you on your meadows," said the King to the Marquis. "This field, as I can clearly see, yields three crops in one year!"

And so they went on their way.

But Puss was ahead of them still, and everything was turning out just as he hoped. For, later in the afternoon, he came to a cornfield where a farmer and his wife and a dozen labourers were reaping the golden barley and tying it into sheaves.

"Ho, there!" cried Puss, the Master Cat, one hand on his hip, and his whiskers curling each side of his strong white teeth. "You, my good people who are reaping the corn, listen to me! The King will be passing this way, and he is sure to stop and ask you to whom

this beautiful cornfield belongs. If you do not tell him that it belongs to My Lord the Marquis of Carabas, you shall all be chopped as small as mincemeat!"

"Spare us, good Master Cat," cried the farmer and his wife, kneeling before him, "and we will indeed tell the King what you command us!"

"Do so!" ordered Puss, arching his back, and looking as fierce as twenty tigers, "or before nightfall you will each be cut into at least ten thousand pieces!"

He waved his tail in the air as he went on down the road.

Very soon the Royal Coach stopped by the cornfield, and the King popped his head out of the window.

"What a fine field of barley this is!" he exclaimed; and again he asked the farmer who was the owner of the cornlands.

"It belongs to My Lord the Marquis of Carabas!" said the farmer, and his wife and all the labourers joined in. "Yes, to My Lord the Marquis of Carabas"—for they were even more afraid of what the Cat had threatened.

"Let me congratulate you on your cornlands," said the King to the Marquis. "This field, as I can clearly see, must yield a record harvest every year!"

So they went on their way.

But Puss was ahead of them still, and everything was turning out better than he had ever hoped it would. And when the evening was approaching, he came to a great and splendid Castle that stood in the middle of a most beautiful park.

Now this Castle was the home of a terrible Ogre, one of the most wicked that ever lived. He dined every day off human flesh, and his bread was made from the bones of his victims. All the land through which the King had been passing belonged to this Ogre, and he was about the richest Ogre in the whole world.

Puss, who was a clever Cat, knew all about the Ogre. And so he marched bravely up to the gate and asked to speak to the Lord of the Castle.

All the guards and all the servants feared and hated the Ogre, but they all had to obey him, or they would have been eaten too. And so one of them led Puss into the great hall where the Ogre was waiting for his dinner.

"Get out!" roared the Ogre, "or I'll eat you!" The servant fled, but Puss came slowly forward, bowing at every step.

"Well, you fluffy little beast," snarled the Ogre, "what in the name of Mischief do you want?"

"Oh, Your Highness!" cried Puss, turning up his eyes and looking humble, "I have heard so often of Your Mightiness, and of the wonderful things that you can do. Why, I have heard it said that you can change yourself into the form of any bird or beast—an eagle, for example, or a tiger, or a lion! Ah, how could I pass your Castle without coming to look upon one so great and so clever!"

"Hum!" growled the Ogre, "you're really quite a sensible sort of Cat, after all! Well, just for this once, I'll show you!"

Springing forward the Ogre turned all in a moment into the most fierce and terrible lion, with great snarling jaws and lashing tail.

Puss gave one screech, and fled out of the window, up a drainpipe, and on to the Castle roof. This was not easy, for it is sadly difficult to walk on the tiles in a pair of top boots, and

to climb a drainpipe in them is almost impossible—even for a cat!

When the Ogre was himself again, Puss came timidly down, peeping round the window-frame and mewing.





"Ah, Your Eminence," he said, bowing to the ground before the Ogre, "never have I been so frightened, never so amazed! Oh, Lofty Sir, I did not believe that anyone could be so clever! But one thing troubles me: I can readily see how one so great as you are can change into such a big and noble beast as a lion. But can you take the shape of some small and worthless creature—a cat, for example, or a rat, or a mouse. That surely is impossible!" "Impossible!" howled the Ogre. "Turks and

Tartarus, you miserable little beast, I'll soon show you if it's impossible."

As he said these words he changed, all in an instant, into a tiny little brown mouse running across the floor.

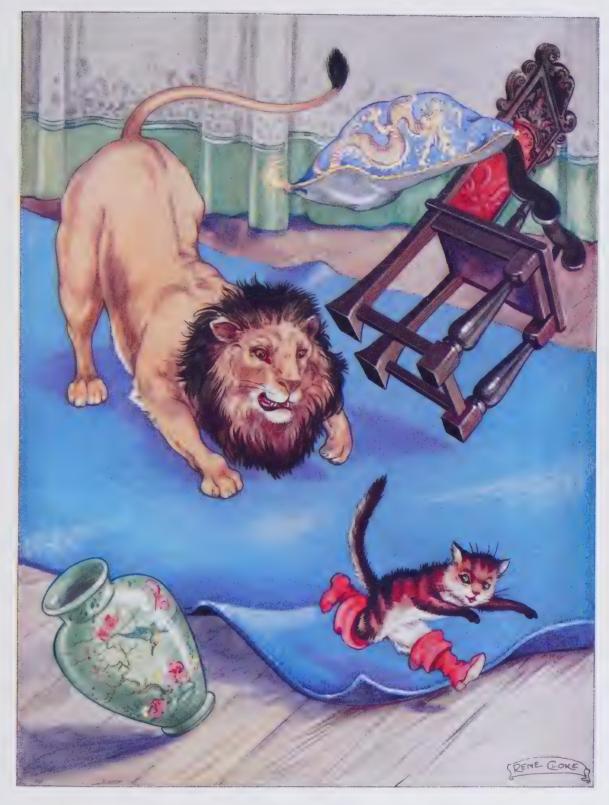
But Puss did not wait to be surprised this time: he arched his back, he waved the tip of his tail—and he sprang upon the little brown mouse, and gobbled it up in a trice. That was the end of the Ogre!

After that, there was very little left for Puss to do except to gather all the Ogre's servants together and say:

"You there! the Ogre is no more, and now I have got you a new Master, who will treat you kindly, and never again eat a single one of you. Serve him faithfully. He will be here in a very little while, and with him the King and the Princess: so go at once and prepare a great banquet for them, and get ready the best bedrooms. And if you do not say that this Castle and all that is in it belongs to My Lord the Marquis of Carabas, why then you shall all be chopped as small as mincemeat!"

All the servants bowed low to Puss, the Master Cat; and they all cried: "Long live our noble Lord, the Marquis of Carabas! Long live Puss, the mighty and valiant Puss in Boots!"

Scarcely had they cleared away all traces of the Ogre, and aired the beds and dusted the rooms and laid the table and cooked the dinner, when there came the sound of wheels rumbling over the drawbridge of the Castle. Instantly Puss ran to the great gate; and as the King stepped out of the Royal Coach, Puss bowed low before him, and cried:



The Ogre turned into the most fierce and terrible lion.

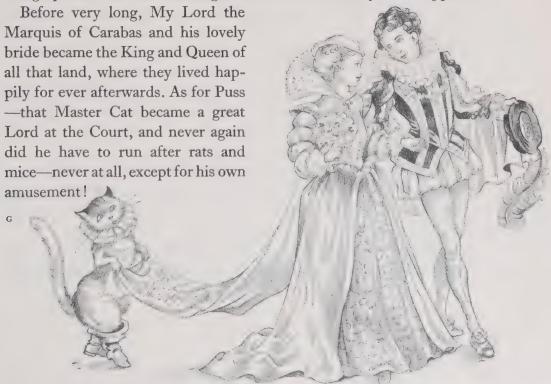
"Your Majesty is right welcome to the Castle of My Lord the Marquis of Carabas!"

"What!" cried the King, as the Marquis stepped from the coach and knelt before him. "Does this Castle also belong to you? Then surely you are the richest man in all this part of the world—for never did I see such farmlands as yours are, or such a fine Castle as this!"

The King marched forward into the great hall, Puss leading the way, and My Lord the Marquis of Carabas following, with his arm round the waist of the Princess, and her head on his shoulder.

"Ah-ha!" said the King, turning round suddenly, and rubbing his hands. "Delightful, quite delightful! Such a Castle; such an estate; such riches and such wealth! And you, My Lord Marquis of Carabas, so young, so handsome, so obviously royal—in short, my dear fellow, it will be nobody's fault but your own if you do not very soon become the husband of the Princess and the heir to my throne!"

The Marquis bowed very low, and the Princess blushed prettily; but neither of them seemed at all displeased. Indeed, they had both thought of the same idea long before ever the King had hit upon it! And when they confessed as much, he sent a swift messenger to fetch the nearest village priest—and the wedding was celebrated directly after supper!



Cinderella

IN the days when Fairies were still to be met with up and down the world, there lived, not far from the Palace of the King, an honest gentleman whose name is long forgotten. Though not a rich man, he was yet a person of some importance—well known, it seems, at the Palace, and not quite unknown in the Court of Fairyland.

This gentleman had but one daughter, whose mother had died at her birth, but in time he got married again—to a lady who had already two daughters of her own, neither of them remarkable for beauty, cleverness or good temper. In the last two of these virtues they took after their mother who, though pretty enough to catch the eye of a lonely gentleman, had the wits of a weasel and the temper of a tom-cat, though just enough guile to keep her future husband in ignorance of her true character until after the wedding!

He was indeed quite deceived, poor man, and thought his future wife the model of sweetness, kindness and good temper—and his new step-daughters the dearest creatures in the world, after his own little girl.

"It will be so pleasant for her to have two sisters—girls of her own age, to be her friends and playfellows," he said to the lady as he was courting her one day. "And you, dearest madam, will, I am sure, love and cherish my poor motherless child."

"Ah, the poor little dear!" cooed that false and cruel lady, "we will indeed use her as she deserves; and you need never fear that my

own sweet girls will ever try to cheat her of her own proper place in your house!"

And so they were married: but the poor gentleman did not live happily ever afterwards.

For no sooner did his new wife enter his house, when once the wedding was over, but she began immediately to show herself in her true colours—and her daughters followed her example quite of their own accord.

Right from the beginning all three of them hated the pretty little daughter of the house, and were more jealous of her beauty and her goodness than they would ever have admitted.

"We will use her as she deserves—indeed we will!" jeered the cruel stepmother. "Yes, we will use her as a servant—as a nasty little drudge. She shall wash the dishes and wipe the tables; she shall scrub the floors and dust the rooms; she shall make the beds and do the chores; and she shall live in the attic and eat in the kitchen!"

So the poor girl was forced to do all the work without any wages. She washed until her fingers were sore, and swept until her back ached; she slept on a heap of straw in a cold attic, and had only one ragged dress of her own, all tattered and torn, and no shoes or slippers at all. She did all the work and had no comforts.

Her step-sisters, on the other hand, had each a big and beautiful room all to herself: there were soft carpets on the floors and warm fires in the grates; the beds were of the most comfortable that could be got, with silk sheets and soft eiderdowns; they had a new dress every week, and were never so happy as when prinking and preening themselves in front of the long mirrors in their bedrooms.

Their little sister did not ever complain even to her father. But he, poor man, could not help seeing how cruelly she was treated



and how wretched she was; and as he was so terrified of his wife that he dared say nothing about it, he himself grew more and more unhappy and worried, until at last he fell ill, and died of a broken heart, leaving his poor little daughter quite at the mercy of her cruel step-mother and step-sisters.

But she never complained, nor did all the hard and unfair treatment which she suffered make her one jot less sweet-natured and happy-hearted. All day long she worked at her cruel drudgery, but she sang as she worked, and her pretty face never grew pinched or crooked with envy or discontent. In the evening, when the work was done, she would sit in the ingle-nook under the wide old chimney—sit on the warm flags among the ashes and the cinders, and dream of happy things, or see stirring pictures in the red glow of the fire.

"Ya!" the elder step-sister remarked one night, pointing at her as she sat in her poor rags in the chimney corner, "Look at her! Just look! Did you ever see such a low, wretched little Cinder Slut in all your life?"

"No, indeed," answered the younger sister, who was not quite so rude. "And we must have a name for her. Cinder Slut would do, of course. But really that's hardly a *name*—it merely describes what she is. Let's call her something to do with cinders, though, as she so loves to sit among them. I know: let's call her Cinderella!"

"Splendid!" giggled the elder sister. "Cinderella is just the name!" And as Cinderella she was known for ever after.

Now it happened one day that the King decided to give a great ball at the Palace for the Prince his son, and all the ladies and gentlemen for many miles round about were invited—including Cinderella and her two step-sisters.

"Oh, yes, little Cinder Slut," jeered the elder sister, "you may have the invitation, but that is all! Now you shall have the pleasure and the honour of helping us prepare our dresses."

What a to-do there was during the week or two before the night of the Royal Ball! The two step-sisters bought the most lovely materials —silks and satins and cloth-of-gold—but poor Cinderella had to do



all the cutting out and the setting up. Morning, noon and night she worked at her sisters' dresses—and never a false stitch did she put in.

"Ah," said the elder, when the great day came at last, "how fine I shall be in my red velvet and gold thread, with my diamond necklace and my golden girdle. Cinderella, come and set my hair for me this instant—and if one curl is out of place, I'll beat you with the broom-handle until you are black and blue!"

Cinderella worked away obediently, and presently the younger sister came in to get dressed.

"How lovely I shall look," she said, smirking in front of the mirror, "the Prince will fall in love with me the moment he sees me! Nobody's dress will be as beautiful or as expensive as my yellow satin and pink mantle, and all the rubies and emeralds on my bodice! Lace me up tight, Cinderella; no one at the Ball can possibly have so slim a figure as I—and if you break a single one of my gold laces, I'll scratch your face with my nails!"

Cinderella did as she was told. She dressed her sisters and set their hair; she held the paint and the powder while they made up their



faces: in fact, she helped them in everything—and got never a word of thanks.

"Don't you wish you were coming too?" jeered the elder.

"Oh, sister, if only I could!" cried Cinderella, clasping her hands. "But alas, I have no fine clothes like yours—and I could hardly go in these, my rags."

"No, indeed," the younger sister laughed cruelly. "Who ever heard of a Cinder Slut at a Royal Ball? How the beautiful ladies, the Duchesses and the Countesses—and Princesses, too, perhaps—how they would laugh to see such a ragged little creature. How the Prince and the handsome young gentlemen would jeer at you, and make fun of such a hideous little Cinder Slut!"

By this time the coach had arrived at the door and Cinderella helped her sisters into it, and stood forlornly out in the cold, her little bare feet quite blue from the frosty ground.

"Ta-ta!" mocked the first sister, waving her lace handkerchief out of the window. "Be a good Cinder Slut while we are away! Don't let the fire out! Don't forget to wash the dishes. Be sure to put hot water bottles in our beds. Have a good time—there are lots of bones and



dry crusts for your supper. And there's lots of nice green, slimy water in the water-butt!"

"Goodbye, Cinderella," jeered the second sister, smirking over her fan. "Tomorrow, as a great treat, we'll tell you all about the Ball—what we had to eat for supper, and what we had to drink; all about the lovely dresses of the ladies, and about how many handsome gentlemen we danced with. Why, I shouldn't be surprised if the Prince decided to marry one of us—for where else in the country could he possibly find anyone so lovely, or so good, or so sweet-tempered as I am!"

"Oooo! you nasty cat!" screamed the elder sister, "if he marries either of us it will be me! Why, if he looked once at my angelic face, he'd fall in love immediately."

The coach rolled away into the night, with the two sisters screaming insults at each other, and poor Cinderella stood and watched it for as long as it was in sight. Then she turned sadly back into the house,



finished washing the dishes and tidying the rooms, and at last settled down among the cinders in her favourite warm corner.

As she sat there, thinking of the Royal Ball, and imagining what it would be like to go to it—to find, perhaps, a handsome Prince who would love her and make her his Princess—poor Cinderella began to cry softly, her tear-drops falling like bright diamonds among the grey ashes in the big hearth.

And then suddenly she heard a voice speaking to her very kindly and sweetly: "Cinderella! Cinderella! Why are you crying?"

She looked up in surprise, and there standing on the edge of the firelight, but shining with a pale silver radiance all of her own, she saw a lovely old lady in a tall hat, who carried a long slim wand in her hand at the top of which a star seemed to dance and sparkle

—now green, now yellow, and now clear silver, as a candle flame is reflected in the eyes of a cat.

"Who are you, kind lady?" asked Cinderella, crouching down in the corner by the fire, and yet not really the least bit frightened.

"My dear," the beautiful being replied, "I am a Fairy. When you were christened, sixteen whole years ago, I came to the side of your cradle and gave you the gift of hope—so you see, I am your Godmother. And ever since your own mother died, I have often been

quite near to you without you knowing it—watching over you, ready to help when the right moment came. Oh, my dear, you have indeed shown yourself by your patience and kindness to be my Goddaughter, and the child of my dearest friend, your mother. But, Cinderella, why are you crying now?"

"Oh, dear, dear Godmother!" exclaimed Cinderella, clasping her hands, and trying hard to swallow her tears. "How very, very good of you





Cinderella did as she was told and dressed her sisters and set their hair.

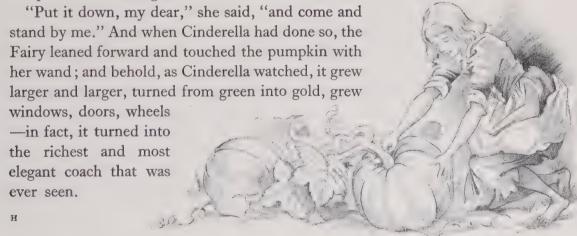
to come and see me. I'm feeling terribly unhappy and lonely tonight; my two step-sisters have gone off to the Ball at the Palace, and have left me behind. And, Godmother dear, I do so want to go to that Ball!"

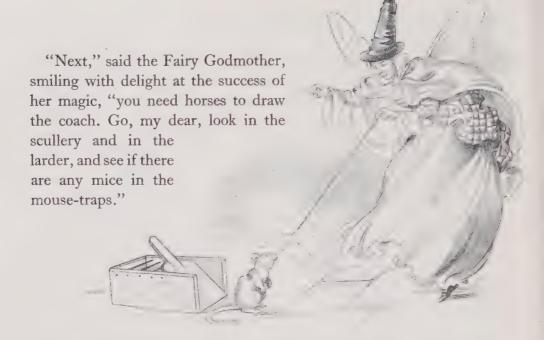
"Well, child, well," said the Fairy, smiling kindly, "I think that will be quite easy. Yes, if you will do as I tell you, you shall go to the Ball, my Cinderella."

"Oh, anything, Godmother, anything, if only I can go!" cried Cinderella, jumping up eagerly, and shaking the ashes out of her poor torn dress. "I'll do all the work here for the rest of my life; I'll sleep on the cold stone floor; I'll live on potato-peelings and cabbage stalks—anything you say, if—if only I may go to the Ball!"

The Fairy laughed softly, with a sound like little silver bells tinkling in the distance. "No, Cinderella, you are meant for other things than washing dishes—for other food than your sisters' leavings. But now you must help me—for if you are going to the Royal Ball, it must be in a style worthy of my God-daughter! Let me see now: first of all we want a pumpkin. Yes. Run out into the garden, my dear, and fetch me the biggest you can find. Bring it round to the front of the house—you will find me waiting for you there."

Off ran Cinderella obediently, out into the cold night, and very soon she had found a huge pumpkin about three times as big as her own head. This she carried round to the carriage-drive in front of the house; and there, sure enough, was the Fairy Godmother standing in the porch and shining like a moonbeam.





Off ran Cinderella obediently, and returned very soon carrying two cage-traps which rocked backwards and forwards in her hands as the mice ran up and down inside them.

"Let the mice out, one by one," commanded the Fairy Godmother, and when Cinderella did so she touched each little grey mouse in turn with her wand; and behold, as Cinderella watched, it grew larger and larger, its legs grew longer and longer, its tail grew thicker and more silky—and in less than no time there stood a fine, sleek, prancing horse of a beautiful mouse-coloured dapple grey. Very soon there were six fine horses harnessed to the coach, and stamping sparks out of the ground in their eagerness to be off to the Palace.

The Fairy Godmother walked round the horses and admired the effect of her magic for a few minutes.

"Now, my dear," she said, returning to the porch where Cinderella stood shivering in the cold night air, "you will have a warm and comfortable journey to the Palace. But stay—whatever shall we do for a coachman?"

Cinderella thought for a moment: "I know!" she said, "the rat-trap in the cellar! If there's a rat there, you can turn him into a coachman."

"The very thing," cried the Fairy Godmother, "run along, my child, and fetch me the largest rat you can find!"

Off went Cinderella obediently, down the dark, dusty stone steps all hollowed out in the middle from the beer-barrels that had been rolled down them, and into the passage which led along beside the vaulted cellars where the wine was stored. Her candle flickered and cast great shadows on the whitewashed walls, and her feet pattered on the cold stone flags. Presently she came to the rat-trap—and there sure enough was a big, brown rat! Cinderella was a bit frightened, for the rat looked so fierce, and chattered its teeth at her so angrily; but she picked up the trap, and carried it out of the cellar and on to the doorstep where her Godmother was waiting.

"Open the trap, my dear," said the Fairy Godmother, and as the great rat dashed gladly out under the little door, she touched it once with her wand.

The rat stopped quite still, looking so very surprised that Cinderella could hardly help laughing. Then, to her surprise, the rat began to laugh as well! It sat up on its haunches, it threw back its head, and it just guffawed! As it did so, it swelled and swelled; its whiskers curled up instead of down, its nose turned down instead of up, its face became redder and redder, and its chest yellower and yellower—until Cinderella could see that it was no longer a rat, but a fat, jolly coachman with a round red face, a brown livery and a yellow waist-coat, who sat on the step of the coach, laughing and crowing for breath.

"Burst my buttons!" puffed the coachman, mopping his brow with a red spotted handkerchief, "I've never laughed so much in all my born days!" With that, he scrambled to his feet, touched his hat to Cinderella and her Fairy Godmother, and climbed up on to the golden box in front of the coach.

"Now, my dear," said the Fairy Godmother again, when she had admired the coachman, "go into the garden and turn over all the flower-pots until you have found six green lizards—and bring them all to me!"



Off ran Cinderella obediently once more; and before very long back she came with six smart green lizards held carefully in a rhubarb leaf.

"Put them on the ground, my dear," said the Fairy Godmother. When this was done, she touched the lizards with her wand, and at once they became six smart footmen, dressed all in green livery with long tail-coats. The six footmen drew themselves up smartly, touched their six black hats to Cinderella and her Godmother, and sprang up behind the coach, ready for the journey.

"Well, now, my darling Godchild," said the Fairy, sparkling like a whole cluster of stars with sheer delight at the success of her magic, "now you have a coach and horses that a Queen might envy, a coachman and footmen such as were never seen: now, Cinderella, you may go to the Ball!"

"Oh, thank you, thank you, dearest Godmother!" exclaimed Cinderella, clapping her hands with joy. And she ran down the steps towards the coach. But as she felt the cold, sharp gravel under her bare feet, she remembered, and turned back sadly.



"Oh, Godmother," she murmured, "I am all dressed in rags, and I have no dancing slippers—surely I ought not to go to the Royal Ball like this?"

"Magic and Meringues!" exclaimed the Fairy Godmother—"To think I should have forgotten the most important thing! Come in out of the cold at once!" And when she had led Cinderella back into the warm kitchen, she touched her once with the wand, and in a moment changed all her rags into the most lovely evening dress, shining and shimmering with jewels, and into a lovely evening cloak of silver. Last of all she touched Cinderella's dainty little feet—and on them appeared a pair of wonderful glass slippers lined with dark blue silk that shone and sparkled like stars in a still lake.

"Goodbye, my dear," said the Fairy Godmother as she led Cinderella to the coach and kissed her for luck. "Go to the Ball, and enjoy yourself to your heart's content. But remember one thing: you must be out of the Palace by the time the clock strikes twelve—or something terrible will happen!"

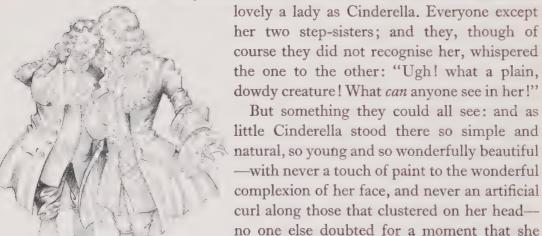
Cinderella waved goodbye, promising to obey her Godmother's wishes; the coachman cracked his whip, the footmen cheered, the

horses snorted, and away they went over the frosty roads towards the Palace of the King.

As the coach drove up the great main drive to the Palace, two of the footmen blew a long clear blast on their horns, so that when they drew up at the great door in the courtyard, where a purple carpet was spread right down the steps, a line of Palace footmen stood ready to receive her. And Cinderella was led up the steps and into the Palace, while before her went the fat and pompous Majordomo, whose duty was to announce each new guest. He had asked Cinderella her name, but she had not given it (for so her Godmother had advised), and now he stood just inside the door of the Great Ballroom, beat three times on the floor with his Wand of Office, and proclaimed in a loud voice:

"Way for the Princess! The Unknown Princess!"

There was a pause in the dance, and everyone drew back to leave a clear space by the door. Then Cinderella entered, and stood for a moment looking about her: and there went up a sigh, a little "Oh!" of wonder from everyone in the room, for no one there had ever seen so



Least of all the Prince! "Who is she?" he asked of a Lord-in-Waiting, and scarcely waiting for his whispered "the Unknown

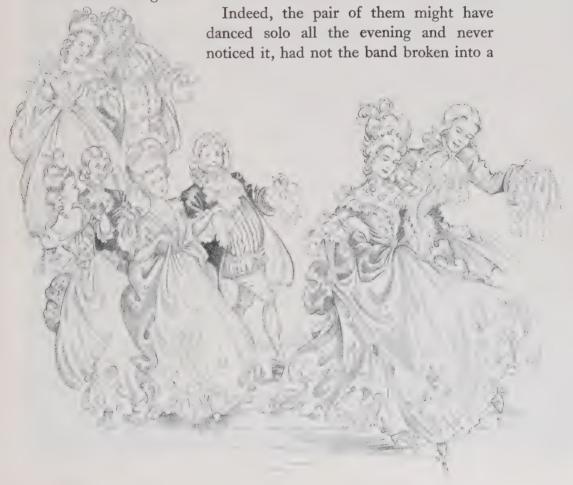
was indeed a real princess.

Princess, your highness", he strode across the floor and bowed low before Cinderella.

"Beautiful Princess," he said in his clear, ringing tones, "may I have the honour of this dance with you?"

Cinderella blushed very prettily, and curtseyed low to him; and he took her hand and raised her from the ground, and away they went into the middle of the Ballroom, while the Royal Orchestra struck up a minuet.

What a graceful and distinguished couple they made! Before very long all the other pairs of dancers had stopped to watch the Prince and Cinderella as, forgetful of all else, they followed out all the figures and turns of the dance, the Prince never taking his eyes from Cinderella's face, nor she for one moment abashed by the frank admiration of his gaze.



Pavan, in which all the dancers had to join so as to complete all the groups and figures needful for that dance.

Presently supper was announced, and the Prince led Cinderella into the beautiful room where it was served, and seated her in the place of honour beside him, where he served her with the best of everything: cold roast peacock and cold roast chicken; green peas and new potatoes; meringues and trifles; jellies and cream cakes; strawberries and raspberries with sugar and cream; and many rare and tasty wines.

When supper was ended, they returned to the Ballroom and danced together again more than once. And when the Prince had to go and dance with someone else, and Cinderella wanted to sit out and rest, he fetched for her a jewelled glass of raspberry wine and a silver dish of the most delicious sugared fruits.

Now Cinderella had noticed where her two step-sisters were sitting (and they sat out for nearly every dance, because not many men wished for them as partners), and she went at once and sat down beside them—quite unrecognised by either of them. Many people in her place would have taken such an opportunity as this to mock or gloat over them, but not so Cinderella. She spoke kindly and

sweetly to them—much to their delight, for everyone in the room was jealous of the attentions of the Unknown Princess—and she gave them some of the rare fruits which the Prince had given to her,

and was as kind to them as anyone could wish.

Presently the Prince came back and led Cinderella away for another dance, and at the end of this she happened to look at the clock, and noticed that it was nearly a quarter to twelve. Then she





The Fairy Godmother changed Cinderella's rags into the most lovely evening dress.



remembered what her Godmother had told her, and she turned to the Prince and, curtseying low, said to him:

"Your Royal Highness, I must now leave you, for I have far to drive. May I first thank you for the most perfect evening I have yet enjoyed?"



"Ah, lovely Princess," cried the Prince, clasping her hand, "do not go yet! Or if you must, promise that you will be here tomorrow, when I shall give another Ball greater and more splendid than this, all in your honour."

Cinderella blushed deeply at the compliment, and said: "Your Royal Highness honours me too much. But, if it is permitted, I will indeed be present at the Ball tomorrow."

The Prince kissed her hand, and then he turned to the rest of the company, and, when the Majordomo had struck the ground three times and commanded silence, he spoke:

65

"Ladies and Gentlemen: I have much pleasure in telling you that tomorrow night I will give another Ball—this time in honour of the Unknown Princess. Ladies and Gentlemen, I invite you all!"

"Three cheers for the Prince! Three cheers for the Unknown Princess!" shouted everyone. But when the Prince turned to take Cinderella by the hand, she was gone. Not very long after, all the clocks in the Palace began to strike midnight.



But Cinderella was out of the Palace and well on her way home in the magic coach before the first stroke of twelve. When she got back to her home, there was the Fairy Godmother standing waiting for her in the porch.

"Well, my dear," she said, as she helped Cinderella down, "I trust that you have enjoyed yourself at the Ball? I am indeed glad to see

you back so very punctually—and I hope that your coach, horses and attendants were all that you could wish!"

She waved her wand as she spoke, and behold, there were only six grey mice and six green lizards, one brown rat and one large pumpkin, all looking very small and lonely on the big carriage drive.

"Oh Godmother," said Cinderella, "I have had the loveliest time. The Prince danced with me nearly every dance, and, oh Godmother dear . . . may I go to the Ball again tomorrow? . . . because he's asked me—and the Ball tomorrow is for me specially. Please will you help me to go?"

"Yes, my dear, I will," answered her Godmother as she led Cinderella out of the cold night and into the warm kitchen where the fire was burning cheerfully. "But now you must go to sleep. See, you are again the little ragged girl who sat among the cinders and cried because her unkind sisters had gone to the Ball and left her behind. So good-night, my dear, good-night!"

Cinderella nestled down on the warm flags with the ashes and cinders all about her, drew her rags more closely round her legs and arms, and was asleep in a moment, and dreaming that the handsome Prince—her Prince in the dream—came and kissed her and claimed her for his bride. She did not wake up until, at about five in the morning, there came a great ringing and knocking at the front door when her sisters, who had stayed until the very end, arrived home from the Ball.

Cinderella ran to the door and let them in: then she lit the lamp in the kitchen and put the pan of hot milk on to the fire to make them each a nice warm drink before they went to bed.

"Did you enjoy the Ball?" she asked, as they sat in the kitchen chairs and yawned and rubbed their feet. "Do please tell me all about it!" and indeed at that moment it seemed almost like a dream—she could hardly believe that she had really been there herself.

"Well, Cinder Slut," said the elder sister, nursing one foot, and yawning so much that she nearly broke her jaw, "I don't mind telling you a bit about it. The Ball was quite well in its way—I could have

gone on dancing for hours. I do declare that we hardly sat out at all! And the Prince has invited us to go again tonight."

"Yes," chimed in the second sister, "and there came a wonderful Princess—all very mysterious, for nobody knows who she is. But indeed everyone agreed that she was the most beautiful ever seen by mortal eyes (I can't say I thought much of her!). The Prince danced with her nearly all the evening—and, just think, we were almost the only other people she spoke to! She came and sat by us for ever such a long time, and gave us candied oranges and citrons. And the Ball tonight is to be given in her honour."

"Indeed," said Cinderella, smiling a little to herself, "and what was the name of this wonderful Princess?"

"That no one knows," said the elder sister, "not even the Prince! She left the Ball at about midnight, and ever since he has been going from person to person asking if anyone knew who she was—but nobody does. They call her the Unknown Princess—and the Prince, I'll be bound, is terribly in love with her!"

Cinderella hardly knew whether to laugh or cry, but she managed to hide her feelings and say almost jestingly: "How lovely she must be—I wish I could see her! Sister, won't you lend me your second-best yellow gown tonight, and let me come to the Ball?"

"Huh!" cried the sister crossly, "me lend my yellow gown to a nasty little Cinder Slut like you? Not likely! Now I'm off to bed—and if you don't bring me my breakfast at twelve o'clock sharp, I'll beat you till you can't see out of your eyes!"

"Three eggs and a pot of honey for me," said the second sister, also getting ready to go to bed—for by now they had drunk their hot milk (without leaving a drop for Cinderella). "And if one of the eggs is boiled even a second too long, I'll shut you all night in the coal cellar with the black beetles!"

Then off they went to bed—too tired, I am glad to say, to notice that Cinderella had quite forgotten to give them their hot water bottles!

All day long Cinderella worked in the house, scrubbing the floors,

peeling the potatoes, waiting on her sisters, and washing the dishes. In the evening she helped once more to dress them in all their finery, and saw them drive off to the Palace again, shouting shrill commands to her to have everything ready for them when they came in after the Ball.

But this evening she did not sit in the cinders and cry. She knew that her Fairy Godmother would not forget her, so she went on tidying up the house as quickly as she could. And sure enough, she had scarcely finished her work when she heard a voice behind her say: "Good evening, my dear. I am glad to see that you are ready for the Ball!" and there was the Fairy, smiling kindly and waving her wand that had already turned Cinderella's rags into an even lovelier dress than the night before.

"Dear child," said her Godmother, kissing her goodbye, "be quick now, for the coach is waiting at the door. Go to the Ball and be truly happy—but above all things, remember to leave before the clocks strike twelve!"

Cinderella promised to be obedient; and she kissed the Fairy, and then ran down to the door, where the very same coach, with the six mousey-grey horses, the six green-liveried footmen in their long tail coats, and the very same jovial coachman with the red face and the yellow waistcoat, were waiting for her.

In she jumped, as gay as could be, kissed her hand to the Fairy Godmother, and rattled off down the frosty drive and away to the Royal Palace.

Now, ever since an hour before the Ball was due to begin, the Prince had been standing on the steps and waiting for his Unknown Princess to arrive. He greeted all his guests as they came, Dukes and Duchesses, Earls and Countesses, Lords and Ladies, Marquises and Marchionesses—but still he waited. And at last, when he had almost given up hope, there came into the courtyard a great golden coach that shone in the moonlight, and out of it stepped Cinderella.

In a moment the Prince was at her side, stooping to kiss her hand, and leading her tenderly up the steps.

"My dear Princess," he murmured, "how truly kind of you to honour my poor Ball with your presence."

As they came to the Ballroom door, the stout Majordomo struck three times on the floor with his Wand of Office: the band stopped playing and everyone stopped dancing and grew silent as he announced:

"Way there! Way for His Royal Highness the Prince and Her Royal Highness the Unknown Princess!"

Everyone cheered as the Prince and Cinderella came into the room, bowed to each other, and led the dance in the middle of the Ballroom as the Royal Orchestra struck up a Royal minuet.

The Prince and Cinderella danced together again and again. As before, they went into supper together, where he served her with all the rarest foods and wines. Later in the evening they sat out together in the Royal Conservatory under a palm tree, and talked about a number of interesting things. Cinderella found time also to go to her step-sisters who were still sitting out, and to talk kindly to them, and share with them all the rare fruits and rich bon-bons which the Prince had given her.

But soon the Prince came to claim her for another dance, and off they went, whirling round as light and as graceful as thistledown, and as happy as a Prince and Princess should be. And Cinderella was happy! After all these years of hard work and drudgery, of unkind remarks and scornful gibes, to be dancing in the Royal Palace, the chosen partner of a handsome Prince whose every glance, whose every sigh spoke of his true love for her—how could Cinderella not be happy? So happy, so contented, that she quite forgot her Fairy Godmother's warning, and was still dancing with the Prince without a care in the world, when suddenly the great golden clock in the Ballroom began to strike twelve!

One! Two! Three! Cinderella paid no attention. Four! Five! Six! Suddenly she looked up, saw the face of the clock, and gave a little scream of fear. Seven! Eight! Nine! She had broken away from the astonished Prince and was speeding across the room. Ten! Eleven! Twelve! She made a last effort, and got through the door in time—



though at the eleventh stroke, as she was hurrying away, she dropped one of her lovely glass slippers.

For a little while the Prince stood quite still, he was so surprised. The music stopped; the guests all paused to see what was wrong. Then he started forward to follow Cinderella, and at the door he found the little glass slipper. He stooped and picked it up,

and went on, out into the passage that led down the great stairs and out into the courtyard.

At the foot of the stairs stood two men-at-arms on guard:

"Did a lovely Princess pass this way a few minutes ago?" cried the Prince, stopping for a moment.

"No, Your Royal Highness," said one of the men-at-arms, clicking his heels and saluting, "no one has passed this way for a long time, except a young girl who was dressed all in rags and tatters, and looked like some poor village maiden who had come to help in the kitchen. We shouted to her to stop, but she did not seem to hear us, and went straight out into the night. But there has come no Princess this way!"

The Prince searched all over the Palace, and questioned every guard and man-at-arms, every footman and every page—but not one of them had seen the Unknown Princess since the moment when she left the Ballroom as the clock started to strike twelve!

For the moment the last stroke was sounding, all Cinderella's fine clothes vanished away, and she was clad in her old rags, all soiled and stained from hard work. Sobbing with fear and disappointment, she ran out into the courtyard where her coach should have been waiting for



her—but all she saw was a big brown rat running away over the white gravel!

On and on she ran, along the cold, stony roads, until at last she came home, tired and breathless, with nothing left of all her finery but one odd glass slipper. This she put carefully in her pocket, and then settled down, still sobbing, to get warm in her usual place by the fire. There was no Fairy Godmother to welcome her home tonight—but when she fell asleep, her dreams were still happy ones, and in them the Prince still loved her and called her his Princess.

A few hours later the two step-sisters arrived home from the dance, and woke Cinderella, who again prepared hot drinks for them while they sat by the fire to warm themselves, and talked away about the Ball.

"And did you enjoy yourselves as much tonight as you did last night?" she asked, as she knelt stirring the pan. "And was the lovely Princess there again?"

"What an inquisitive little Cinder Slut you are!" cried the elder sister, kicking off her shoes and putting her feet on the hob, where they were soon steaming comfortably. "Yes, the Unknown Princess was there tonight sure enough. And the Prince danced with her all the time—except when she left him to come and talk to us and give us fruits and bon-bons. We are quite favourites, I do declare!"

"She was there," interrupted the second sister, unlacing her stays with an old-fashioned tin-opener, "but she left in an awful hurry as soon as the clock struck twelve—simply bolted. It was most odd! But she dropped one of her slippers—a pretty little glass slipper. The Prince picked it up; and all the rest of the time he would not dance with anyone, but sat sighing and looking at the slipper. Oh, certainly the Prince is very much in love with the Unknown Princess!"

"That he is," agreed the elder sister gulping down the hot milk and choking over the skin, "and she's a lovely Princess, with the smallest, prettiest feet in the world. At least that is what the Prince says—but

of course he's in love with her. Can't say I saw much beauty in her, now I come to think of it. I've seen better myself."

"So have I," hiccupped the younger sister (who had drunk her milk too fast) as she smirked at herself in the mirror. "Now I'm going to bed. Bring us both our breakfast in bed, Cinder Slut—and don't forget to give us cream with our bread-and-milk, or we'll stick pins into you!"

Off went the two sisters to bed; and Cinderella, when she had washed up after them, and folded and put away their Ball dresses (which they left lying all over the bedroom floor), returned to her corner among the ashes. There she slept until it was quite morning, when she woke with a start from a pleasant dream, and began to wonder what would happen next, and whether she had lost the Prince for ever by her disobedience.

And as the days went by, while she still toiled and slaved for her step-sisters (who were now crosser than ever), she began to think that she was surely forgotten. But it was not so at all, for the Prince was indeed most deeply in love with the beautiful Unknown Princess, and most extremely upset by her strange disappearance. At first he sent out all the Royal Detectives to look for her; but although most of them found a clue, none of them found the Princess.

Then the Prince took the matter quite into his own hands, and issued a Royal Proclamation that he would marry the lady whose foot would fit exactly into the little glass slipper which the Unknown Princess had dropped as she fled from the Ball. For it was such a wonderfully small and beautifully shaped slipper that the Prince was quite sure it could fit only his one Princess in all the world.

There was great excitement throughout the land when the Prince's Royal Proclamation was heard, and his messengers were kept very busy indeed as they went from castle to castle and from house to house trying on the glass slipper.

First they visited all the Princesses in that and the neighbouring kingdoms; but none of them could wear the glass slipper. Then they visited the Duchesses and the Countesses, the Marchionesses and

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the Ladies; but none of them could so much as fit four toes into the glass slipper. After that the messengers visited the daughters of all the Knights and Baronets, of all the squires and all the gentry in the whole Kingdom—but every one of them was less and less able to put on the glass slipper; indeed, the messengers had only to take one look at their feet to know how useless it was for them to try.

Then one day, as they neared the end of their luckless quest, the Royal Messengers came to the house where lived Cinderella and her two step-sisters. They blew their trumpets at the gate, and marched up to the front door with much pomp—but without the slightest hope of success.

When they heard the knocking at the door, the two sisters sent Cinderella to see who was there; and she was ready to collapse with surprise when the Royal Messenger told her his business and pointed to the herald, who carried Cinderella's own lost glass slipper on a royal purple velvet cushion.

But she pretended to know nothing about it, and led the messenger into the parlour, where her two step-sisters were seated, drinking their morning chocolate.

"Ladies," said the Royal Messenger, bowing low, "I come from His Royal Highness the Prince, in quest of the Unknown Princess.

When she fled from the Ball she dropped this one glass slipper—and His Royal Highness believes that none but she can wear it. So he has sworn to marry whatever lady, be she of high or low degree, this glass slipper will fit exactly."

Then the trumpeter blew a blast on his silver trumpet, and the Royal Messenger bowed once more.

"Oh, golly!" exclaimed the elder sister, going quite purple with excitement, "that's my slipper, I know it is! You there, just let me try it on; I'll show you if it fits me or not!"

The herald knelt and held the slipper out to her: but try how she would she could not get more than three toes into it!







Cinderella ran out into the courtyard where the coach should have been waiting.

"When you have quite finished making a fool of yourself," remarked the second sister, "perhaps you'll admit that the slipper is mine. Let me have it, I say, and stop trying to push your great foot in where it doesn't belong!"

With a very bad grace the first sister gave up the slipper, and the second sister, after soaping her heel with great care, tried to put it on. But try how she would, *she* could not possibly get more



than two toes into it—and as for her heel, well that stuck right out over the back, and all the shoe-horns in the world could not have got it into the little glass slipper!

Now all this while Cinderella had stood by watching her stepsisters' vain attempts. But when they had quite given up trying, and sat sulking and growling and trying to bribe the messengers, she said, very timidly:

"Please, do you think I could try on that lovely little glass slipper?"
"You!" jeered the elder step-sister, "who ever heard of anything so absurd! A low Cinder Slut who goes barefoot in the kitchen. Think you that she can wear a Princess's slipper?"

"Well, of all the cheek I ever did hear!" echoed the younger stepsister, "the Cinder Slut will start pretending next to be a real Princess! Why, her feet must be all swollen and hard from walking all day on the hard stone floors. Go back to the kitchen this instant, and never again dare to speak in the presence of your betters—you wretched little Cinder Slut!"

But the Royal Messenger bowed gravely to Cinderella: "Madam," he said, just as politely as if he were speaking to a Duchess, "His Royal Highness commanded us to let all persons try on the glass slipper—all persons both high and low. Sit down in the chair, and we will see whether it fits or not."



Cinderella seated herself in a great chair, her heart beating loudly, and the herald knelt in front of her and held out the slipper. And it fitted perfectly—so perfectly that everyone could see at once that it had indeed been made for Cinderella, and for her alone!

The trumpeter blew his trumpet until the plates toppled from the shelves, and the Royal Messenger proclaimed: "The Princess is found! The Unknown Princess! The Princess Cinderella!"

But her two step-sisters went nearly mad with jealousy, fury and surprise.

"It's a cheat!" they cried, "it's a beastly shame. It's only a fluke!" Cinderella said nothing, but looked at the Royal Messenger. He thought for a moment, and then said:

"You must all come with me to the Prince this very moment—all just as you are!" He took back the slipper from Cinderella, placed

it once more on the purple cushion, and away they went to the Royal Palace.

What a strange procession they seemed as they came up the steps and into the Throne-room where the Prince sat in state, waiting for his Messengers to return!

First came the Royal Messenger with the Proclamation, and behind him the herald who carried the slipper—both in splendid liveries that shone with silver and gold. Then came the two step-sisters, rather vulgarly dressed, rather ugly than otherwise, but both smirking and mincing along as if the world held none fairer than they. And behind them came Cinderella in her poor torn working dress, her hair falling loose over her shoulders, and her bare feet peeping out from under her skirt. She looked so lovely even as she was, and so simple and modest, that the Prince felt his heart beat faster, and he could scarcely take his eyes off her. And last of all came the trumpeter, glorious with his silver trumpet and his herald's tabard—and he blew another blast on the trumpet as the Royal Messenger bowed before the Prince and said:

"Your Highness, the only person in all the land on whose foot the glass slipper of the Unknown Princess fits perfectly is this little maid in poor and tattered clothes. But these two ladies, her step-sisters, declare that she is only a cinder-wench, and that the slipper must surely fit her by chance or fraud alone."

The Prince rose from his throne and came slowly down to where Cinderella stood. Very gravely he took her by the hand and led her to the throne, where he made her sit. Then he took the slipper from off the purple cushion, and kneeling on one knee, he placed it on her foot—where indeed it fitted quite perfectly.

"Lady," said he, in the great hush that fell upon everyone, "are you indeed the Unknown Princess who won my heart at the Ball and lost her slipper as she fled so strangely away as the clock struck twelve?"

Blushing and smiling, Cinderella leaned forward and suddenly took the other slipper out of her pocket and set it on the other foot so that the Prince and everyone else could indeed see that she wore now a perfect pair.

Then the Prince took her hand and kissed it, and, turning to all present, cried out: "This is the Unknown Princess whom I love, and none other shall be my bride!"

"Your Highness! Your Highness!" screamed the two step-sisters, quite green with jealousy, "she is only our kitchen Cinder Slut! She was never at the Ball—why, those rags are the only dress she has in the world!"

"What is your name, my Princess?" the Prince asked, paying no attention whatsoever to the jealous ravings of the two step-sisters.

"They call me Cinderella," she replied, "because I am indeed their servant, though they are my step-sisters—and my place is indeed among the cinders in the chimney corner."

"Your place is on the throne at my side," said the Prince quietly, "for you only I love in all the world, and if you can love me none other shall be my bride and my Queen, but only Princess Cinderella!"

The Prince then held her in his arms and kissed her before all the Court. Then suddenly they heard a little tinkle of silvery laughter. And there was Cinderella's Fairy Godmother standing beside them and smiling ever so kindly.

"Prince," said the Fairy Godmother, as he bowed low before her, "you have chosen well and nobly. Cinderella, as my God-daughter, is a Princess in her own right—the sweetest, dearest, most loving and most perfect Princess anywhere in the world. You chose her when she seemed only a poor cinder-wench—blessed be your choice!"

Then she touched Cinderella with her wand, and at once the poor rags changed into the beautiful dress which the Unknown Princess had worn at the Ball—and now indeed no one could doubt that they were one and the same person.

But the two step-sisters ran to her and fell on their knees before Cinderella—for they expected her to take some terrible revenge upon them immediately for all the cruel things which they had said and done to her.



There was great excitement when the Prince's Royal Proclamation was heard.



Cinderella, however, had no such thought anywhere in her heart. She raised them up very kindly, and kissed them both. When they said how sorry and ashamed they were of all their unkindness, she forgave them at once, and begged them only to love her and to be real sisters to her. They were so touched by her kindness, and so ashamed of all their meanness and jealousy and spite, that ever after they did indeed love her dearly, and think of her rather than themselves; so that in time they both became quite sweet faced and good looking—and before very long both of them were married to great Lords at the Court.

But Cinderella and the Prince had the most magnificent Royal Wedding that had ever been seen. All the fairies attended, and brought many wonderful gifts; but the Fairy Godmother gave away the bride, and she was the guest of honour at the great Banquet that was given after the ceremony.

In time, Cinderella and the Prince became King and Queen of that country, and they lived long and happily together; nor did the Prince ever once regret that he had chosen to marry a little cinder-wench!









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